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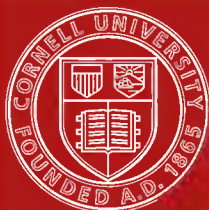
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The Shakespeare symphony; an introduction



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THE SHAKESPEARE  
SYMPHONY





# THE SHAKESPEARE SYMPHONY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ETHICS  
OF THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

BY  
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LONDON  
CHAPMAN AND HALL LTD.  
11 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden

1906

*Handwritten initials: A above R*

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“The men of one generation can never look at Truth with the same eyes as their fathers. The world changes; the field of knowledge and of action widens; and we, if we will be true to our trust, must enlarge our outlook in response. In one age the change will be more rapid, in another less. But, quick or slow it is always going forward. Progress is inevitable and it is for our health. Were it to cease, all that is worth to be called life would cease with it; we should sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition.”

E. VAUGHAN.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mr. William Watson has well said,

Your Marlowe's page I close, my Shakespeare's ope ;  
How welcome—after gong and cymbal's din—  
The continuity, the long slow slope  
And vast curves of the gradual violin !

The methods of criticism have been so specialised and detached, that it seems to have been unnoticed that the Elizabethan Dramatists constitute an Orchestra playing a great Symphony.

The roulades and cadenzas of John Lyly, the blare of Christopher Marlowe, the long slow slope of Shakespeare's violin, the sadder sweep of Mas-singer's viola, the flutings of John Fletcher and Thomas Heywood, the harshness of Ford's bas-son, the heroic fanfares of Michael Drayton, and the gloom of John Webster's double-bass, all blend into an amazing Harmony.

In current estimation this movement has no ethical significance. "There is, perhaps," says Professor Dowden, "no body of literature which has less of an expressed tendency for the intel-lect than the drama of the age of Elizabeth ; it is for the most part absolutely devoid of a con-scious purpose."<sup>1</sup>

- *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art*, p. 9.

## INTRODUCTION

The facts now brought together into focus, prove however, that, far from being the planless and sporadic efforts of uncultivated Genius, the Elizabethan Drama was a movement freighted with the deliberate and conscious purpose of attuning the human mind to greater possibilities.

With some it is a tenet that in the golden epoch of Elizabeth Poesy was an indigenous weed, and sweetness and light were widely disseminated. To expose this fallacy and to point the exceptional beauty of the dramatic Harmony I shall be constrained to emphasise the elsewhere prevailing Discord. In justice to the dramatists I must contrast the grace of their chivalry with the coarseness of contemporary manners; the serenity of their Religion with the harshness of current Theology; the richness of their Philosophy with the barren jangle of the Schools.

At times composers inadvertently repeat stray phrases from the music of other men; occasionally they deliberately and dishonestly do so. But that a group of exalted Artists should consciously, or coincidentally, produce entire Symphonies uniform with each other, not merely in leading movements, but identically phrase for phrase and bar for bar, even to faulty progression and false relation,—such a paradox seemingly exceeds all reason.

Through a garner of short extracts, most of them intrinsically beautiful, I shall lead the reader to the certainty that the Elizabethan Drama is a Symphony, so complex that existing writing systems were inefficient for its expression; so daring and original that the composers were driven to invent and employ a new notation.

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I have no wish to impose any unjust inferences on these facts, certainties being so numerous that there is happily no necessity to patch them with surmises. For the time being I content myself with a brief and essential statement of the paradox, entrusting its final solution to the future.

At whatever times I refer to "the dramatists" I would be understood to mean *some* of them. Much of the Elizabethan Drama is avowedly patchwork. It is customary to find several authors' names combined on the same title page, and few things are more bewildering than the manner in which trash and sublimity rub shoulders with each other.

It is an impossibility nowadays for any student of Elizabethan literature to ignore the so-called Shakespeare-Bacon theory. I am uncertain what effect this book may have upon it. While on the one hand it tends to support the claims made on behalf of Bacon and much to enlarge them, on the other—especially as regards the arguments derivable from internal evidence—it reduces the subject, apparently *ad absurdum*. In any case, however, the additional light thrown upon it must be an advantage. As a modern scientist has said, Delusion and Error do not perish by controversial warfare. They perish under the slow and silent operations of changes to which they are unable to adapt themselves.





## CHAPTER I.

### LONDON'S PARNASSUS

It was the opinion of Dr Johnson that a thousand years might elapse before the appearance of another poet with a power of versification equal to that of Pope. In his *Discoveries* Ben Jonson observes that "Every beggarly corporation affords the state a Mayor or two Bailiffs yearly ; but *solus rex, aut poeta, non quotannis nascitur.*"

Within a few hundred years of the birth of Chaucer, that Morning Star of English song, London produced nearly simultaneously an outburst of poets whose minds were cast almost in the same mould as that of Shakespeare. Of this phenomenon, known vaguely as "The Elizabethan Drama," Swinburne observes, "Born with Marlowe it rose at once with Shakespeare to heights inaccessible before, and since, and forever, to sink through bright gradations of glorious decline to its final and beautiful sunset in Shirley."

The appreciation of this literature entails some knowledge of the moral and social conditions which environed it, and out of which it sprang. To appraise early writers by modern tastes is as disabling to judgment as the con-

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templation of a garden from the altitude of some remote eminence ; one must descend and examine from the level. The student who looks deeper and investigates the quality and condition of the soil will find his wonder enhanced by the fact that it was obviously reclaimed from surrounding and ever encroaching swamp.

Whatever may be the opinion of critics as to the condition of learning and morality in the Elizabethan era, it is almost universally admitted that the London playhouses were places of abomination. As the Stage was the Parnassus whereon the choir of Elizabethan singing birds had their habitation, it is desirable to note a few facts in its connection.

The Englishman or to-day has little or no conception of the conditions of life prevailing in the Elizabethan period. London was a plague haunted little city of less than 200,000 inhabitants, most of them so illiterate that they were unable to read or write. It was an age "instinct with vast animal life, robust health and muscular energy ; terrible in its rude and unrefined appetites." According to the author of *The Arte of English Poesie*, published in the year 1589, "In these dayes.... poets, as poesie, are despised, and the name become... subject to scorne and derision, and rather a reproch than a prayse. And this procedes through the barbarous ignorance of the time, and pride of many gentlemen and others, whose grosse heads not being brought up or acquainted with any excellent arte.... they do deride and scorne it in all others." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arber reprints, No. 15, p. 35.

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In the eyes of Europeans Englishmen were regarded as barbarians with whom it was impossible to associate as equals. It is recorded by travellers that our pleasures consisted of eating, drinking, and fighting. "The English," said a Frenchman in the last years of Queen Mary, "are great drunkards." Their conversation is continually interspersed with phrases such as these, "*Drind iou,*" "*I plaigou,*" "*Bigod sol drind iou agoud oin,*" (meaning thereby, "I drink to you," "I pledge you," "By God I shall drink you a good wine.") There is no kind of order: the people are reprobates and thorough enemies of good manners and letters, for they do not know whether they belong to God or the devil, and their manners are very impolite."<sup>1</sup> The common people were inconceivably vicious and degraded, delighting in indescribable orgies and fierce open air sports. In the slums of the suburbs the rude and primitive playhouses formed nuclei for all that was vile, adventurous, and hazardous in the floating population. It is distinctly intimated by contemporaries that the theatres were centres of organised vice. In 1579 we find them described as "the nest of the devil and the sink of all sin."<sup>2</sup> In 1595 the Lord Mayor of London wrote to the Privy Council complaining that "Among other inconveniences [of the playhouses] it is not the least that the refuse sort of evil disposed and ungodly people about this City have opportunity hereby to assemble together and to make their matches for all their lewd and ungodly practices, being also the

<sup>1</sup> See *A Short History of Hampton Court*. Law p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Arber reprint, No. 3, p. 10.

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ordinary places for all masterless men and vagabond persons that haunt the highways to meet together." Two years later the Mayor again complained that the theatres were the haunts of "thieves, horse-stealers, whoremongers, cozeners, coney-catchers, contrivers of treason, and other idle and dangerous persons."<sup>1</sup> In 1572 Harrison in his *Chronology* wrote, "Would to God these comon plaie(r)s were exiled for altogether as seminaries of impiety, and their theatres pulled down as no better than houses of bawdrie."<sup>2</sup> The behaviour of the players must have been abnormally vicious to have shocked the robust susceptibilities of Elizabethan London. That they succeeded in overstepping the bounds is testified by the fact that in the interests of order and decency the City forbade the erection of playhouses within its precincts. For this reason "The Globe" at Southwark, "The Curtain" at Shoreditch and other wellknown houses were erected outside the boundaries in suburban districts within swift access of sanctuaries such as "Alsatia," and "The Clink." Gabriel Harvey describes these playhouse localities as "filthie haunts."<sup>3</sup> For a woman to enter a theatre meant the loss of her character. Actors, classed with mountebanks, zanies 'and buffoons' were regarded as mere caterpillars of the commonwealth, "a very superfluous sort of men." Under the Poor Law of 1572 they were, unless licensed, deemed to be "rogues, vacabounds, and sturdye beggars." On first conviction they were ordered "to bee grevouslye whipped and burnte

<sup>1</sup> City of London MSS. Outlines p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> *Elizabethan England*, Scott Library, p. 268.

<sup>3</sup> *Four Letters*, 1592.

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through the gristle of the right eare with an hot yron of the compasse of an ynch about, manifestinge his or her rogyshe kind of lyef.”<sup>1</sup> A second offence was adjudged felony; a third entailed death. In order to evade the stringencies of the law, the unhappy actors — “foolish beasts,” Nash terms them, “mocked and flouted at in every man’s common talk”<sup>2</sup> — sheltered themselves by enlisting as the servants of some great man. There is a popular impression that aristocrat and actor fraternised together, but as Dyce asserts “plays were scarcely recognised as literature,” and “authors seldom presumed to approach the mansions of the aristocracy.”<sup>3</sup> Even the festive students of Grays Inn (after the Twelfth Night fiasco, at which it is not unlikely that Shakespeare was present) protested against the insult of having had foisted upon them “a company of base and common fellows,” — to wit, professional players.

The contemptible estimation in which actors were held and the low status of the theatres are both reflected in Ben Jonson’s *Poetaster*.

*Tucca.* “Whats he that stalks by there boy?”

*2 Pyr.* Tis a player, Sir.

*Tucca.* A player! call him, call the lousy slave hither; what, will he sail by and not once strike or vail to a man of war? ha! Do you hear you player, rogue, stalker, come back here! — (*enter Histrio*). No respect to men of

<sup>1</sup> 14th Eliz., c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Summer's Last Will*. (Prologue).

<sup>3</sup> *Works of Marlowe*, p. xxv.

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worship you slave! what you are proud you rascal, are you proud, ha? you grow rich do you and purchase, you twopenny tearmouth?"

The "twopenny tearmouth" protests he saw not the captain, but on tendering satisfaction is invited to a supper where possibly he may meet the son of "a man of worship" who may be persuaded to furnish a play.

*Tucca.* "If he pen for thee once thou shalt not need to travel with thy pumps full of gravel any more after a blind jade and a hamper, and stalk upon boards and barrel heads to an old cracked trumpet."

As an attraction to the captain the player observes,

"We have as much ribaldry in our plays as can be, as you would wish Captain: all the sinners in the suburbs come and applaud our action daily.

*Tucca.* Well, go thy ways, pursue thy projects, let me alone with this design: my Poetaster shall make thee a play and thou shalt be a man of good parts in it."

Eventually the invitation is extended to other distinguished members of the profession.

*Tucca.* "Marry, you may bring Frisker, my zany; he's a good skipping swaggerer; and your fat fool there, my Mango, bring him too; but let him not beg rapiers, nor scarfs, in his over familiar playing face, nor roar out his barren bold jests with a tormenting laughter, between drunk and dry. Do you hear, stiff-toe? Give him warning, admonition, to forsake his saucy glavering grace and his goggle eye; it

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does not become him, sirrah ; tell him so. ”  
(Act. III. Sc. 1) 1601-1602.

The impression conveyed by this satire accords so precisely with other contemporary testimony that there is little reason to question its truthfulness. “It offends me to the soul,” says Hamlet, “to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise..... O there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I thought some of nature’s journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.”

One is induced to think it probable that the Pyramus and Thisbe interlude in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was founded upon fact, and that Bottom and his company of clowns were limned from life. The most popular favourites seem, in many cases, to have been ex-tradesmen. Webster is described as a merchant tailor ; Burbage, whose roaring for a horse has rendered him immortal, is said to have been a carpenter ; Dekker is supposed to have been a shoemaker, and Tradition has it that Shakespeare was apprenticed to a butcher.

With the exception of Alleyne none of the Elizabethan actors seem to have been men of

<sup>1</sup> Here and subsequently where two dates are given the first implies the year in which the work was first heard of, the second the year of its publication.

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exalted character. Messrs Seccombe and Allen in *The Age of Shakespeare*, remind us that, "Of the early actors it is important to observe that the most noted were low comedians or buffoons, such as Tarleton, Wilson, and Kemp, most of whom were adepts at farcical improvisation." <sup>1</sup>

The early playwrights seem also to have been men whose lives were in perfect sympathy with their surroundings. A typical example of the Elizabethan actor-dramatist is Robert Greene. He is assumed to have collaborated with Shakespeare, and to have shared in the literary and philosophic feasts at the Mermaid Tavern. "Whoredome," says Greene, "was my daily exercise, <sup>2</sup> and glutony with drunkenness was my onely delight," and, he adds, though "famoused for an arch-playmaking poet," his companions "were lightly the lewdest persons in the land, apt for pilfering, perjury, forgery, or any villainy, who came still to my lodgings, and these would continue quaffing, carousing, and surfeiting with me all day long." <sup>3</sup> Gabriel Harvey, though personally unacquainted with Greene, makes some pertinent observations about him ;

"O Lord, what a pregnant occasion were here presented to display leaud vanity in his lively coullours, and to decipher the very misteries of that base arte ! Petty cooseners are not woorth the naming : he, they say, was the monarch of crosbiters, and the very empereur of shifters. I was altogether unacquainted with the man, and never once saluted

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II. p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *The Repentance of Robert Greene.*

<sup>3</sup> *Shakespeare and His Predecessors.* (Boas) p. 36.



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him by name : but who in London hath not heard of his dissolute and licentious living ; his fonde disguisinge of a Master of Arte with ruffianly haire, unseemely apparell, and more unseemelye company ; his vaine-glorious and Thrasonically bravinge ; his piperly extemporizing and Tarletonizing ; his apische counterfeiting of every ridiculous and absurd toy ; his fine coosening of jugglers, and finer jugling with cooseners ; hys villainous cogging and foisting ; his monstrous swearinge and horrible forswearing ; his impious profaning of sacred textes ; his other scandalous and blasphemous ravinge ; his riotous and outrageous surfeitinge ; his continuall shifting of lodginges ; his plausible musteringe and banquettinge of roysterly acquaintance at his first cumminge ; his beggarly departing in every hostisses debt ; his infamous resorting to the *Banckeside, Shorditch, Southwarke*, and other filthy hauntes ; his obscure lurkinge in basest corners ; his pawning of his sword, cloake, and what not, when money came short ; his impudent pamphletting, phantasticall interluding, and desperate libelling, when other coosening shiftes failed ; his imployinge of Ball (surnamed Cuttinge Ball), till he was intercepted at Tiborne, to leavy a crew of his trustiest companions to garde him in daunger of arrestes ; his keping of the foresaid Balls sister, a sorry ragged queane, of whome hee had his base sonne Infortunatus Greene ; his forsaking of his owne wife, too honest for such a husband ; —particulars are infinite ; —his contemning of superiours, deriding of other (others ?), and defying of all good order ? ”

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A surfeit of pickled herrings and Rhenish wine carried off the egregious Robert Greene in the thirty second year of his age.

The career of Christopher Marlowe was so conspicuously evil that it was honoured by being made the theme of a contemporary ballad.<sup>1</sup> I quote some of the verses.

All you that have got eares to heare,  
Now listen unto mee ;  
Whilst I do tell a tale of feare ;  
A true one it shall bee :

A truer storie nere was told,  
As some alive can showe ;  
'Tis of a man in crime grown olde,  
Though age he did not know.

Both day and night would he blaspheme,  
And day and night would sweare,  
As if his life was but a dreame,  
Not ending in dispaire.

A poet was he of repute,  
And wrote full many a playe,  
Now strutting in a silken sute,  
Then begging by the way.

He had alsoe a player beene  
Upon the Curtaine-stage,  
But brake his leg in one lewd scene,  
When in his early age.

<sup>1</sup> This ballad was brought to light by J. P. Collier. It is accepted as gennine by the cautious Dyce. Enquiries of Dr. Warner at the British Museum and of Dr. A. H. Bullen fail to elicit any reason for assuming it to be a forgery.

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He was a fellow to all those  
That did God's laws reject,  
Consorting with the Christians' foes  
And men of ill aspect.

Ruffians and cutpurses hee  
Had ever at his backe,  
And led a life most foule and free,  
To his eternall wracke.

He now is gone to his account,  
And gone before his time,  
Did not his wicked deedes surmount  
All precedent of crime.

He had a friend, once gay and greene,<sup>1</sup>  
Who died not long before,  
The wofull'st wretch was ever seene,  
The worst ere woman bore,

His lust was lawlesse as his life,  
And brought about his death ;  
For, in a deadlie mortall strife,  
Striving to stop the breath

Of one who was his rivall foe,  
With his owne dagger slaine,  
He groand, and word spoke never moe,  
Pierc'd through the eye and braine.

Thus did he come to suddaine ende  
That was a foe to all,  
And least unto himselfe a friend,  
And raging passion's thrall.

1 A friend, once gay and greene ; i. e. Robert Greene.

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Among the Harleian Collection is a manuscript entitled *A note, containyng the opinion of one Christofer Marlye concernyng his damnable opinions and judgment of relygion and scorne of Gods worde.* This document, as printed in Dyce's edition of Marlowe, is maimed by asterisks, which are explained by the editor as indicating passages of such an abominable nature that he did not choose to print them. The portions printed, if accurate, prove Marlowe to have been a foulmouthed creature who, "in almost every company he cometh persuadeth men to Atheisme." At the age of 29 he met with a violent death. In the course of a brawl in connection with a courtesan, he was stabbed in the eye by a serving man, in a Deptford tavern. It was said that "hee even cursed and blasphemed to his last gasp and, together with his breath, an oath flew out of his mouth."

The lives of these intellectuals grow monotonous in their sameness. No balled has immortalised George Peele, but his exploits—or what purport to be — lie embalmed in the *Merry iests of George Peele gentleman, sometime a student in Oxford, wherein is shewed the course of his life; how he lived: a man very well known in the citie of London and elsewhere.*

*Buy, reade and judge,  
The price doe not grudge;  
It will doe thee more pleasure  
Than twice so much treasure.*

This literary hogwash is not unlikely part fiction: assuming some probable foundation of fact Peele was a dissolute and contemptible rogue. He had previously been figured on the stage in

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similar colours in the pseudo-Shakespearean play *The Puritan*. Of his discreditable end Meres wrote, "As Anacreon died of the pot, so George Peele by the pox."

Thomas Nash — another Parnassian prematurely cropped at the early age of 34 — is recorded to have been so harum scarum that at the University of Cambridge the term "A verie Nash" became a byword. An epitaph among the Sloane MSS states that he "never in his life paid shoemaker or tailor." <sup>1</sup>

The rising genius of Thomas Randolph promised great things, but "he indulged himself too much with those who sought and delighted in his company and was too early cut off in the 29th year of his age." (Dodsley vol. vi).

Of the later dramatists some were men of education <sup>2</sup> and morality, but the majority seem to have been mere children of misfortune, constantly figuring as borrowers in Henslowe's Note book. John Day, the delightful author of *Humour out of Breath*, is described by Ben Jonson as "a base fellow," and a "rogue." If we may believe some lines written by a gentleman of Lincolns Inn "on his running away and bilking his landlord," "he was of rather light principle." <sup>3</sup> Middleton is characterised by Ben Jonson as "but a base fellow." Of Tourneur we are almost completely ignorant. Nothing is known of the character of John Webster. In "an unfortunate extreme" — i. e. they were both in jail — Massinger and Field write to Henslowe entrea-

<sup>1</sup> *Dict. National Biography*. Vol. 40, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> Beaumont was dead before he reached thirty.

<sup>3</sup> *Biographica Dramatica*. Vol. 1, p. 179. 1812.

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ting him to consider their cases with humanity and to lend them £ 5. A second document shews Field "unluckily taken on an execution for £30" and begging for £ 10. Of Dekker we know nothing definite, but according to Ben Jonson, he too was a "rogue." There is an entry in Henslowe, "Lent unto the company the 4 of February 1598 to discharge Mr Dickers owt of the cownter in the powltrei the some of fortie shillings." "Mr Dickers'" misfortunes seem to have been chronic, Oldys informing us that from 1613 to 1616 he was again in jail. Even the refined and courtly Lyly is described as "a mad lad as ever twang'd, never troubled with any substance of witt, or circumstance of honestie." <sup>1</sup>

1 Gabriel Harvey (*Pierce's Supererogation*) 1593.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SWEETNESS AND GRAVITY OF THE DRAMATIC MIND

It has been the opinion of biographers that the Elizabethan dramatists wrote simply and solely for a livelihood. Of Shakespeare, Mr Sidney Lee considers that Pope had just warrant for the surmise that he,

“For gain, not glory, winged his roving flight  
And grew immortal in his own despite.”

Halliwell-Phillipps is of the opinion that Shakespeare's “sole aim was to please an audience most of whom, be it remembered, were not only illiterate, but unable to either read or write.”

We learn from the Diary of Philip Henslowe the theatrical financier, how persistently he was dunned by the dramatists, and the various sums which he advanced to them from time to time.

It would be rational to expect that plays written for popularity by such writers for such auditors, would reflect the prevailing ignorance and obscenity. There is reason to suppose that in the *acting* versions such was probably the case. Ben Jonson, in the dedication of *Volpone* (1605-1607), remarks: “Now, especially in dramatic, or, as they term it, stage poetry, nothing but ribaldry, profanation, blasphemy, all license of offence to

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God and man, is practised..... I have ever trembled to think towards the least prophaneness, have loathed the use of such foul and unwashed bawdry as is now made the food of the scene."

The *printed* plays which have come down to us display, however, few, if any, traces of this license; neither is there perceptible any suggestion of their having been written with a primary view to making money; but on the other hand, much evidence of a contrary spirit. Instead of mercenary motives the writers were apparently actuated by a religious fervour and a pitiful compassion for their fellow men. We find, for instance, the young trickster George Peele writing,

"Then help Divine Adonai to conduct  
Upon the wings of my well tempered verse  
The hearers minds above the towers of Heaven."

In a similar strain Massinger writes,

"Prosper thou Great Existence my endeavours as they religiously are undertaken and distant equally from servile gain."

The profligate and disreputable dramatists were, apparently, inspired by the same humility as led the philosopher Bacon to believe he was born for the service of mankind, and to conclude the preface of his *Great Instauration* with the prayer,

"May Thou therefore O Father guard and direct this work which issuing from Thy goodness seeks in return Thy glory."

In his *Essay Of Discourse* Bacon says: "As for jest there be certain things which ought to be privileged from it, namely, *religion, matters of state, great persons*.... and any case that deserveth *pity*," a sentiment which we find acted up to



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throughout all published plays of this period. It is, in point of fact, peculiarly emphasized ; Webster, for example, writing, " I do not like this jesting with *religion* ;" Massinger, " I much wonder you can raise mirth from his *misery* ;" and Bird, " Who will venture on a jest that can rail on anothers pain, or idly scan *affairs of state*."

The authors of *The Age of Shakespeare*, after reminding us that most, if not all the popular actors of the day were facial contortionists or jiggers, continue : " Aiming first and foremost at popular applause our early dramatists had of necessity to provide these popular favourites with suitable opportunities, which they often abused by introducing 'gag' of their own. Hence the strong and often exaggerated element of jiggling and clownage in all our serious drama from *Faustus* even to *Lear*."

There is admittedly much worthless and offensive farce in our old Drama, but it is relatively fractional. The majority is of such a character that it is an everlasting subject of wonder how the illiterate and disorderly rabble, for whose entertainment it was written, ever could have possibly endured it. What meaning was attached by "the shouting varletry" to such phrases as, for instance, "deracinating savagery," "exsufflicate surmises," "the discandyng of this pelleted storm," and "the multitudinous seas incarnadine?" Was it acceptable to the groundlings, capable for the most part of nothing but inexplicable dumbsheiw and noise, to hear a "crown" described as an "inclusive verge of golden metal," and a "sigh" as a "windy suspiration of forced breath?"

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In pomp of speech Shakespeare is run very closely by most of his fellow dramatists ; and in comparison with some of the Elizabethan Drama the *Novum Organum* is light reading. What scope for declamation or for " saucy and glavering grace " was afforded by such a passage as, for instance, the following from Chapman's *Admiral of France* ?

" I mean not sleep, which the philosophers call a natural cessation of the common, and consequently, of all the exterior senses, caused first and immediately by a detention of spirits, which can have no communication, since the way is obstructed by which these spirits should commerce, by vapours ascending from the stomach to the head, by which evaporation the roots of the nerves are filled, through which the animal spirits to be poured into the dwellings of the external senses ; — but sleep, I take for death, which all know to be *ultima linea*."

Rant and Rhetoric must have flagged and waxed feeble in face of lines such as :

" That power of rule philosophers ascribe  
To Him they call the Supreme of the stars,  
Making their influences governors  
Of sublunary creatures, when themselves  
Are senseless of their operations.

What ! *(Thunder and lightning)*  
Dost start at thunder ? Credit my belief  
'Tis a mere effect of Nature — an exhalation hot  
And dry involved within a watery vapour  
I' the middle region of the air ; whose coldness,  
Congealing that thick moisture to a cloud,

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The angry exhalation, shut within  
A prison of contrary quality,  
Strives to be free and with the violent  
Eruption through the grossness of that cloud,  
Makes this noise we hear."

These extracts, of which the latter is from Tourneur's *Atheists Tragedy*, are taken almost at random. They are not an unfair type of the style of a large section of the Elizabethan drama.

It is a matter of some surprise to find a close relationship between the writings of Francis Bacon, and the stage plays of the despised dramatists. This intimate acquaintance is demonstrated by many direct instances, of which I will cite a few here, and others hereinafter :

Perfumes, the more they are chafed, the more they render their pleasing scents ; and so affliction expresseth virtue fully, whether true or else adulterate.

WEBSTER (*White Devil*)  
1612.

Ambition, 'tis of vipers breed... Ambition, like a seelèd dove, mounts upward higher and higher still to perch on clouds.

FORD (*Broken Heart*  
II. 2.). 1633.

Virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed ; for prosperity doth best discover vice ; but adversity doth best discover virtue.

BACON (*Essay of Adversity*). 1625.

Ambition is... malign and venomous... No man will take that part, except he be like a seelèd dove, which mounts and mounts, because he cannot see about him.

BACON (*Essay : Ambition*). 1625.

A peculiar demonstration of the manner in

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which the dramatists borrowed from the works of Bacon, occurs in connection with Duelling. This evil was one of the many which Bacon endeavoured to crush. In the year 1613 he drew up a "Proposition of Advice," to some extent adopted by the Government, for in the same year two duellists were arrested and brought up before the Star Chamber. On this occasion Bacon delivered a speech for the prosecution, subsequently printed and published under the title of *A charge touching Duels, etc.*<sup>1</sup> Therein occurs the following:—

"Nay, I should think, my Lords, that men of birth and quality will leave the practice when it begins to be villified, and come so low as to barber-surgeons and butchers and such base mechanical persons....

"Again, my Lords, it is a miserable effect when young men full of towardness and hope such as the poets call "*Auroræ Filii*," Sons of the Morning, in whom the expectation and comfort of their friends consisteth, shall be cast away and destroyed in such a vain manner. But much more it is to be deplored, when so much noble and gentle blood shall be spilt upon such follies, as, *if it were adventured in the field in service of the King, were able to make the fortune of a day and to change the fortune of a kingdome....*

"Nay, *the French themselves, whence this folly seemeth chiefly to have flown, never had it but only in practice and toleration, but never as authorised by law.*"

1 Spedding, vol. iv, p. 398.

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To find this State document transmuted into poetry, we must turn to the plays of Philip Massinger, whom, in *A Very Woman* (v. 6.) 1634-1655, we find writing as follows:—

“I would teach the world a better way  
For the recovery of a wounded honour  
Than with a savage fury, not true courage,  
Still to run headlong on.”

In *The Guardian* (II. I. 1633-1655) Massinger had previously attacked the evil. Therein he refers to :

“Revenge appearing in the shape of valour,  
Which wise kings must distinguish. The defence  
Of reputation, now made a bawd  
To murder ; every trifle falsely styled  
An injury, and not to be determined  
But by a bloody duel : though this vice  
Hath taken root and growth beyond the mountains  
(As *France*, and, in strange fashions, *her ape*,  
*England*, can dearly witness with the loss  
Of *more brave spirits than would have stood the shock*  
*Of the Turk's army*), while Alphonso lives  
It shall not here be planted.”

Bacon's sentiments appear again with noticeable fidelity in *The Little French Lawyer*, (1647) of Beaumont and Fletcher. Act I opens with the following dialogue:—

*Dinant* : “Persuade me not.”

*Claremont* : “'Twill breed a brawl.”

*Dinant* : “I care not :

I wear a sword.”

*Claremont* : “And wear discretion with it,  
Or cast it off ; let that direct your arm,  
'Tis madness else, not valour, and more base

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Than to receive a wrong."

*Dinant* : " Would you have me

Sit down with a disgrace and thank the doer ?

We are not stoics. That passive courage

Is only now commendable in lacqueys,

Peasants, and tradesmen ;<sup>1</sup> not in men of rank

And quality as I am."

*Claremont* : " Do not cherish

That daring vice for which the whole age suffers.

The blood of our bold youth that heretofore

Was spent in honourable action,

Or to defend or to enlarge the kingdom

For the honour of our country and our prince,

Pours itself out with prodigal expense

Upon our mother's lap—the earth, that bred us—

For every trifle. And these private duels

Which *had their first original from the French,*

And for which, to this day, we are justly censured,

Are banished from all civil governments.

I have heard that some of our late kings

Have lost us *many gallant gentlemen,*

*As might have met the great Turk in the field,*

With confidence of a glorious victory."

There are further and less conspicuous identities of thought and diction between the preceding passages and Bacon's *Charge Touching Duels*. Massinger's lines,

" Though this vice

Hath *taken root* and growth beyond the moun-

[tains,...

It shall not here be planted."—

<sup>1</sup> Compare Bacon's " barber-Surgeons, and butchers and such base mechanical persons."

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are matched as follows in Bacon's *Charge*: —

“The *root* of this offence is stubborn... The course which we shall take is to hew and vex the root in the branches, which no doubt in the end will kill the root.”

Beaumont and Fletcher's reference to Duelling as having been

“banished from all *civil governments*,” is paralleled by Bacon's assertion that,

“In *civil states*... they had not this practice of duels.”

Again, Beaumont and Fletcher's lament that,

“The blood of our bold youth  
Pours itself out with prodigal expense  
Upon our mother's lap,”

was, not improbably, suggested by Bacon's following appeal :

“Lastly, I have a petition to the noblesse and gentlemen of England, that they would learn to esteem themselves at a just price... *Their blood is not to be spilt like water*, or a vile thing, therefore that they would rest persuaded there cannot be a form of honour except it be upon a worthy matter.” —

(*A Charge Touching Duels*).

That there was some relationship between Bacon and the playwrights, is to be inferred by the fact that many of them seemingly had access to his private MSS. The identities cannot, I think be explained on any other hypothesis. It will be noticed that Massinger, in a play printed in 1636, apparently quotes from a private letter written by Bacon in 1616 to the Duke

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of Buckingham, *but not printed until 1661*. In the same play he borrows also from certain other works of Bacon which I now quote: —

FROM BACON

*Although kings be not bound to give account of their actions to any but God alone; yet, such are his Majesty's proceedings as he hath always been willing, etc.*

*(A Declaration of the demeanour and carriage of Sir Walter Raleigh; 1618.)*

Sir I *cannot flatter....*

(From a Letter of Advice to the newly made Viscount Villiers written in 1616. First printed 1661.)

You serve a gracious master and a good, and there is a noble and hopeful prince whom you must not disserve. Adore him not as the rising sun in such a measure as that you put a jealousy into the father who raised you.

*(Ibid.)*

FROM MASSINGER

*Though*  
*We stand not bound to yield account to any*  
Why we do this or that  
(the consent  
Of our subjects being included in our will)  
We, out of our free bounties will deliver  
The motives that divert us.

*(Great Duke of Florence*  
Act II. Sc. 2. 1636).  
"Thou flatter'st me!"  
"I cannot;"  
*(Ibid. Act II. Sc. 1.)*

"All true pleasures circle  
your Highness"  
"As the rising sun we  
do receive you."  
*(Ibid. Act I. Sc. 2.)*



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From BACON

Thus may you long live a happy instrument for your king and country. You shall not be a *meteor* or a *blazing star* but *stella fixa*, happy hereafter. (*Ibid.*)

For the manner of my affection to my Lord of Buckingham.... I must confess that it was in this a little *parent-like*.

(Letter to KING  
JAMES 1617).

I am her creature.  
(Letter to himself  
1600).

The Protestant religion is seated in *the golden mean*.

(Advice to VILLIERS  
1616-1661).

I know not how, but *martial men* are given to *love*. I think it is but as they are given to *wine*.

(*Essay. Of Love* 1625).

The above passages from Massinger are merely from two acts of one play ; this writer's total

From MASSINGER

Princes never more make known their wisdom Than when they cherish goodness....

When they advance... an undeserving man....

This thing is still a *comet*, no *true star*.

(*Ibid.* Act I, Sc. I.)

I do profess.... you have been to me a *second father* and may justly challenge my bringing up.

(*Ibid.* Act I, Sc. I.)

I am his Highness' creature.

(*Ibid.* Act I, Sc. I.)

Happy the golden mean !

(*Ibid.* Act I, Sc. I.)

This does amaze me, Madam

That he, a *soldier*, one that drinks rich wines

.... should in his manners Be so averse to women.

(*Ibid.* Act II, Sc. I.)

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indebtedness to Bacon is quite beyond estimate.

The grave and academic features of the early drama are accompanied by a spirit of the most extreme sweetness. From the wealth of benisons with which this literature is jewelled, I quote a handful, among which I have sprinkled a few from the works of Bacon.

The grace of Heaven before, behind thee,  
and on every hand, enwheel thee round!

SHAKESPEARE (*Othello* II. I.) 1622.

Heavens grace enwheel you  
And all good thoughts and prayers dwell about you.  
Abundance be your friend, and holy charity  
Be ever at your hand.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Pilgrim* I. I.) 1647.

To the environings of His benedictions I re-  
commend your Lordship.

BACON (Letter to ESSEX) 1596.

God lead your grace by the hand.

BACON (DEDI. *Essays*) 1625.

Goodness guide thee.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck* II. 3.) 1634.

Goodness guide thee.

FLETCHER (*Monsieur Thomas* III. I.) 1639.

God's Holy Spirit be among you.

BACON (Letter to Parliament) 1626.

The peace of Heaven,  
The fellowship of all great souls, be with thee.

MASSINGER (*Bondman* v. 5.) 1623-1624.

Everlasting love and sweetness bless you.

MASSINGER (*Very Woman* III. 5.) 1634-1655.

Let all the number of the stars give light

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To thy fair way.

SHAKESPEARE (*Antony* III. 2.) 1623.

To thee no star be dark

Both Heaven and Earth friend thee for ever.

FLETCHER (*Two noble kinsmen* I. 4.) 1634.

All the gods go with you.

SHAKESPEARE (*Antony* I. 3.) 1623.

The Gods go with you.

WEBSTER (*Appius and Virginia* I. 3.)

1639-1654.

All the gods go with thee.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster* V. 4.)

1613-1620.

Those blest angels that love goodness guard you.

IBID (*Spanish Curate* IV. 4.) 1622-1647.

The blessing of the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and the Holy Dove, be upon thee, and make the days of thy pilgrimage good and many.

BACON (*New Atlantis*) 1629.

May all the happiness

My prayers ever sued to, fall upon you.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck* II. 3.) 1634.

May Heavens goodness ever dwell about you.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Knight of Malta*

II. 2.) 1647.

May the dew of Heaven fall gently on you sweet one.

FLETCHER (*Elder Brother* IV. 4.) 1637.

God bless thee with long life, honour and hearts ease.

PEELE (*Edward I.*) 1593.

## THE SWEETNESS AND GRAVITY

God and fair winds direct him to his home.

GREENE (*James IV*) 1598.

I leave your Lordship to God's goodness.

BACON (Letter to BISHOP of WINCHESTER) 1616.

God have your Majesty in his divine protection.

BACON (Letter to K. JAMES) 1616.

God keep you and prosper you.

BACON (Letter to VILLIERS) 1616.

God direct you and be with you.

BACON (Letter to his niece) 1617.

Passages such as these lead to the inference that the writers were refined minds, overbrimming with the milk of human kindness. As Spenser observes, "a man by nothing is so well bewrayed as by his manners," and the manners of the dramatists are as excellent as their morals. Facile in compliment and exquisite in courtesy, they display the unmistakable hallmark of fine breeding. Towards women in particular they exhibit manners as lofty as they are remote from tinsel. The position of the weaker sex in the Elizabethan era was very far from enviable, nor was chivalry an universal attribute. "There are," asserted the authors of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1611), "no such courteous and fair wellspoken knights in this age. They will call one 'the son of a whore' that Palmerin of England would have called 'fair Sir;' and one that Rosicleer would have called 'right beauteous damsel' they will call 'damned bitch.'"

A sudden jar like this brings us swiftly down again to the prosaic grey of Actuality. I instance a few examples, proving that what Reality lacked, was provided in that 'nest of the devil and sink of all sin,' the Stage.

## OF THE DRAMATIC MIND

Most radiant, exquisite, and unmatchable beauty,  
I pray you tell me —

SHAKESPEARE (*Twelfth Night* I. 5.) 1623.

Fair mould of beauty, miracle of fame.

PEELE (*Edward I*) 1593.

Fair comely nymph, the beauty of your face hath —

GREENE (*James IV*) 1598.

Fairest of fair that fairness dost excel

This happy day I have to greet you well.

SPENSER<sup>1</sup> (*Fairy Queen* IV. 2.) 1590-1609.

Blissful lamp of excellence!

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* IV. 4.) 1594.

Many sweet morrows to my worthy wife!

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Noble Gentleman* I. 1.)

1647.

Twenty goodmorrows to my lovely Kate!

ANON (*Taming of a Shrew*) 1594.

Madam and mistress, a thousand goodmorrows!

O give you good even! here's a million of manners!

SHAKESPEARE (*Two Gentlemen* II. 1.) 1623.

Fair hour to you mistress!

"Fair hour!" Fine term! Faith I'll score it up  
anon. A beautiful thought to you Sir!

MARSTON (*Dutch Courtesan* III. 1.) 1605.

Many fair mornings Lady!

As many mornings bring as many days

Fair sweet and hopeful to your grace.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster* II. 2.)

1613-1620

<sup>1</sup> I include Spenser among the dramatists as he is said to have written nine lost comedies. "Poorly, poor man he lived, poorly, poor man he died."

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Fair gentle maid, goodmorrow. May thy goodness get thee a happy husband.

FLETCHER (*Two Noble Kinsmen* II. 4.)  
1613-1634.

Hail to thee, Lady ! and the grace of Heaven before, behind thee, and on every hand, enwheel thee round !

SHAKESPEARE (*Othello* II. 1.) 1622.

Bless you fair ladies. God make you all his servants.

MARSTON (*What you will*, IV. 1.) 1607.

“ So all your own desires go with you lady ”  
“ And sweet peace to your grace. ”

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*King and no King*  
IV. 2.) 1611-1619.

These relish of better breeding than the outward circumstances of the dramatists would lead one to anticipate.

From the fact that quite ninety per cent. of the early drama deals with kings, queens, and the ceremonial of court life, it is manifest that the writers were *au fait* with the aristocracy, sharing with Shakespeare that subtle distinction of which Emerson speaks : — “ High behaviour is as rare in fiction as it is in fact. Scott is praised for the fidelity with which he painted the demeanour and conversation of the superior classes. Certainly kings and queens, nobles and great ladies, had some right to complain of the absurdity that had been put in their mouths before the days of *Waverley* ; but neither does Scott’s dialogue bear criticism. His lords brave each other in smart epigrammatic speeches, but the dialogue is in costume, and does not please on the second

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reading : it is not warm with life. In Shakespeare alone the speakers do not strut and bridle, the dialogue is easily great, and he adds to so many titles that of being the best bred man in England and Christendom. ”

In the assertion that Shakespeare stands *alone* Emerson is quite wrong.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE STATE OF LEARNING

“ In the works of Shakespeare, we perceive, ’ says Schlegel, “ an elevation of genius which may almost be said to exceed the powers of human nature.” It was one of Emerson’s *dicta* that the mind of Shakespeare is the horizon of human thought beyond which the world does not see.

According to Macaulay the intellect of Francis Bacon was the most exquisitely constructed ever bestowed upon the human race.

Paradoxical as it sounds, these two intellectual eagles, rarely, if ever, soared higher than the small fowl which fluttered amid the unholy surroundings of the playhouses. Or, to put the paradox in a scarcely less perplexing form, the minds of the “ lewdest persons in the land, apt for pilfering, perjury, forgery or any villainy ” were in few, if any, respects inferior to the finest and most exalted intellects of the age.

A man’s immorality does not necessarily detract from the clarity of his style, but it leaves its impress upon his subject matter. Although the dramatists were “ haunters of the alehouse and brothel, ” “ notable braggarts, ” “ skipping swaggerers, ” “ seminaries of impiety, ” “ base and common fellows, ” “ vagabond abjects, ” and such like, it



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is clear from their writings that in aristocracy of thought and nobility of sentiment they were on almost precisely the same plane as Lord Verulam and the enlightened author of *Religio Medici*, Sir Thomas Browne. To confirm this assertion I shall, for comparison, place side by side passages from the drama and from the writings of Lord Verulam and of Sir Thomas Browne. In felicity of phrase, purity of diction, and exquisite sequence of words, the dramatists mostly equal, sometimes outstrip the philosophers.

To appreciate the depth, profundity, and encyclopædic character of the knowledge displayed, and to realise to what an extent it was in advance of current sentiment and education, it is requisite to contrast a few unimpeachable facts. The current impression that the spacious times of great Elizabeth were a period of high moral and intellectual development is not endorsed by History, nor is it deducible from the evidence of men who were then living. I cite a few contemporaries as witnesses : —

Learning (alas, the while !) is nowadays like a commodity without request, scarce saleable by the hands of a cunning broker. Nothing is more worth money and less in request.

LODGE (PREFACE TO *Josephus*) 1602.

It is hard to find in these days of noblemen or gentlemen any good mathematician, or excellent musician, or notable philosopher, or else a cunning poet. I know very many notable gentlemen in the Court that have written commendably and suppressed it again or suffered it to be published without their own names to it, as

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if it were a discredit for a gentleman to seem learned and to show himself amorous of any good art.... The scorn and ordinary disgrace offered unto poets at these days is cause why few gentlemen do delight in the art.

ANON (*The Arte of English Poesie*) 1589.

Ignorance the Muses doth oppress...  
And those sweet wits which wont the like  
[to frame  
Are now despised and made a laughing game.

SPENSER (*Tears of Muses*) 1591.

That poesy thus embraced in all other places should only find in our time a hard welcome in England, I think the very earth laments it. .... Idle England which now can scarce endure the pain of a pen. .... Poor poetry.... is fallen to be the laughing stock of children.

PHILIP SIDNEY (*Defense of Poetry*) 1580?-1595.

Time was when men would learn and study good things .... Now letters only make men vile. He is upbraidingly called a poet as if it were a contemptible nickname.

BEN JONSON (*Discoveries*) 1620-1641

Though Philosophy in this our age be left as though in second childishness to youths — I had almost said to children — yet, do I surely hold it to be of all matters next to religion the weightiest and the most worthy of human nature.

BACON (INTRO : *Wisdom of the Ancients*) 1609.

So thick and dark an ignorance as now almost covers the age.

BEN JONSON (DEDI : *Catiline*) 1611.

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The more than Cymmerian darkness which hath possessed the world.

COTTON (*Concordance*, INTRO :) 1635.

I purpose (God willing) to proceed in abridging the remaining history of the world if *this ignorant age* dishearten me not.

A. ROSS (*History of World*, INTRO :) 1650.

Virtue is well neere banished, vice hath almost gotten the upper hand, Wisdom is derided of fooles.

"F. B." (DEDI to *Palladis Palatium*) 1604.

Knowledge (how little soever esteemed in this our age)

DIODATI (PREFACE to *Annotations on Bible*)

It being so rare in this age to meet with one noble name that, in fear to be censured for levity and weakness, dares express himself a friend or patron to contemned poetry.

MASSINGER (DEDI : *Emperor of East*)  
1631-1632.

Me and my despised studies.

*Ibid* (DEDI : *Maid of Honour*) 1631-1632.

Unbefriended poesy.

SHIRLEY (*The Example*) 1634-1637.

This deboshed age.

BACON (?) (Advice to RUTLAND) 1595.

This besotted age.

FORD

This iron and malicious age of ours.

ANON (*Arte of English Poesie*) 1589.

These unhappy times disfurnished wholly of heroical spirits.

PEELE (*Order of Garter*) 1593.

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In these unhappy times wherein we live... we find men generally so vicious that virtue is almost extirpate and not a few become so monstrously brutish that no philosophy can sweeten and allay their extreme bitterness.

ANON (INTRO : to *A Discourse of Friendship*) 1676.

It is irrational to sweep aside all such and similar testimony of the inhuman dearth of noble natures as mere babblement and motions, and to assert that, in reality, London was pulsing with moral and intellectual fervour. From almost everywhere we apply, the answer is the same, that Learning and Religion were *in extremis* and that our land was submerged under a flood of brute ignorance.

The dissolution of the Monasteries and the deflexion into the royal Exchequer of revenues hitherto applied to charitable and educational purposes, practically extinguished the glimmering lamp of knowledge. As a sop to public opinion, some small portion of the appropriated revenues was devoted to the foundation of Grammar Schools, so termed from their intent of teaching the Latin accidence. As to the standard of education at these schools, opinions differ. Some authorities maintain that it was rude and primitive ; others assume an advanced and enlightened curriculum. Schoolmasters must, however, have imbibed their education and training at the Universities ; and as streams do not rise higher than their source, it will avoid futile enquiry if we turn at once to conditions prevailing at Oxford and Cambridge.

“Learning,” says a contemporary preacher, “decays. Men will not send their children to the schools. Look upon the wells of the realm—Oxford and Cambridge—they are almost dried

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up.”<sup>1</sup> Peter Martyr writing in 1559, describes the Universities as being both “in a most deplorable state and wanting alike in loyalty, in faith, in teachers and even in any hope for learning.”<sup>2</sup> When, during one of her progresses, Queen Elizabeth paid a State visit to Cambridge, on the cavalcade moving out of the town, we are told that the Duke of Norfolk was induced to turn back and note for himself the melancholy aspect of the unfinished buildings and the pervading air of destitution. He bestowed a largesse and passed on. Strype in his *Annals*, mentions that Archbishop Parker was a benefactor to Cambridge University, repairing the Common Schools, “greatly fallen then into decay and wanting both lead, timber and roofing.” In the beginning of the seventeenth century outward conditions underwent a change for the better, but Learning seems to have been sapped by corruption. In 1597 we find complaint to Parliament of the misbehaviour of Masters of Colleges, who, the petitioners allege, “convert the College profits, given and ordained to the advancement of learning, to the preferment of themselves, their wives and children.”

It is surprising to learn that it was the exception rather than the rule for the better classes to give their sons a college education. “It was thought enough,” says a contemporary<sup>3</sup> “for a nobleman’s son to wind their horn, carry their hawk fair and leave study and learning to mean

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Gilpin, quoted in *Social England*. Traill vol. 3, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Cambridge University*. Mullinger vol. 2, p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Goadby’s *England of Shakespeare*.

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people ;” a statement endorsed by the fact that the great majority of college students were “ragged clerks,” labourers’ sons, and such like base mechanical persons. Mr. Bass Mullinger states that : “Intermingling with a certain small minority of scions of noble houses and country squires we find the sons of poor parsons, yeomen, husbandmen, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, innkeepers, tallow chandlers, bakers, vintners, blacksmiths, curriers, ostlers, labourers and others whose humble origin may be inferred from the fact that they are described merely as ‘plebeians’.”<sup>1</sup>

This assertion awakes a vague questioning as to whether, what Ben Jonson terms, “the green and soggy multitude” must not have been in reality a highly educated and a cultured class. How grim and emphatic a negative is returned by History remains to be seen.

As a matter of fact, instead of being elevated by the bathing which they received at Wisdom’s font, the rabble, by which the Universities were swamped, seem to have run riot and to have dragged down Learning to their own melancholy level. Brawls and disturbances between the authorities and the students were of frequent occurrence.

Mullinger leads one to suppose that it was a traditional custom at the University of Cambridge for students to ignore study. “It was only when some lecturer of more than ordinary reputation, like Albericus, appeared, that his fame, and perhaps the novelty of the subject, attracted more

<sup>1</sup> *History of Cambridge University*. Mullinger, Vol. 2, p. 399  
Lyly appears in the Oxford Registers as *plebeii filius*.

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than one or two listeners. .... We learn, on authority which can hardly be called in question, that the schools still usually presented the same deserted aspect as in the days when Walter Haddon and Dr Caius uttered their pathetic remonstrances and laments, that to ignore the ordinary lectures of the professors had become by this time a tradition in the College." <sup>1</sup>

Antony à Wood makes the sinister statement that, in the year 1561, no degrees in Divinity were given at Oxford, "but one in the Civil Law, three in Physic, and eight in Arts."

"At the University of Cambridge," says the miserable Greene, "I light among wags as lewd as myself, with whom I consumed the flower of my youth."

The average student here and on the continent, seems to have been not unfairly characterised by a contemporary professor who described him as one who "cares nought for wisdom, for acquirements, for the studies which dignify human life, for the Churches weal, or for politics. He is all for buffooneries, idleness, loitering, drinking, lechery, boxing, wounding, killing." <sup>2</sup> It appears from the State papers of the time that in one year (1570) the students of Trinity College, Cambridge, consumed two thousand, two hundred and fifty barrels of beer. <sup>3</sup>

If these sturdy drinkers proved but untoward scholars, it must be conceded that the blame rested largely with their teachers. "Whereas they make one scholler, they marre ten," averred Peacham,

<sup>1</sup> *History of Cambridge University*. Vol. 2, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Vol 2, p. 434.

<sup>3</sup> *The England of Shakespeare*. Goadby, p. 73.

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who describes one country specimen as whipping his boys on a cold morning "for no other purpose than to get himself a heate." <sup>1</sup>

Giordano Bruno, who visited Oxford in 1582-4, avers that the pedantry of its scholars, their ignorance and arrogance conjoined with the rudeness of their demeanour, would have tried the patience of a Job. <sup>2</sup>

A contemporary observer characterises the Universities, not as flourishing homes of Learning and Virtue, but as "abodes of discontent and brawling."

A Fellow of Trinity, described the colleges as, "the haunts of drones, the abodes of sloth and luxury [lasciviousness], monasteries whose inmates yawn and snore rather than colleges of students, trees not merely sterile but diffusing a deadly miasma all around." <sup>3</sup>

Mr Andrew Lang informs us that, in the time of Elizabeth, Oxford was "so illiterate that she could not even provide a University preacher!" <sup>4</sup>

"The Universities," says Goadby, "did little or nothing to instruct in natural philosophy, either for the want of the men to teach, or the means to pay them." <sup>5</sup>

Not only in philosophy, but in every other branch of knowledge, a state of affairs existed, so difficult for a modern mind to realise, that I shall, as far as possible, give the facts in the words of my authorities.

1 *The England of Shakespeare.* p. 99.

2 See *Cambridge University*, Mullinger, vol. 2, p. 284.

3 *Ibid.* p. 263.

4 *Oxford.* p. 101.

5 *England of Shakespeare.* p. 103.



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Towards the close of the sixteenth century the sole exponent of Hebrew at Cambridge was a poverty-stricken Jew, who earned a precarious livelihood by giving private instruction; "probably," says Mullinger, "in the rudiments of the language." At Oxford, another poor Jew was similarly licensed to teach rudiments. Circumstances compelled the Cambridge Jew, whose name was Ferdinand, to leave the University. "Among those," observes Mullinger, "who deplored his departure, was William Eyre, a learned fellow of Emmanuel who, writing to Ussher, (afterwards the Archbishop), observes that, '*While Ferdinand remained*, there existed 'a slight hope' that 'by his means, a certain knowledge of the language might be kept alive at the University.'"

"If Hebrew," continues Mullinger, "was yet so much neglected (at least in our own University) we can hardly be surprised to find that the study of Greek was equally on the wane. When John Bois entered at St Johns College in 1580, the knowledge of the language in the former house of Ascham and Cheke had become almost extinct."

By the efforts of one bright particular star, the study was to some extent revived, "but for the last forty years of the century, it had but few cultivators." After citing four examples of conspicuous scholars, Mullinger observes, "If to these instances we add the well known attainments of Aylmer, and perhaps one or two others, we shall have before us the chief names which serve to prove that a knowledge of Greek at Cambridge, at the period of which we are treating, was not wholly extinct. 'One's industry,' wrote

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Casaubon to Camerarius in 1594, 'is sadly damped by the reflection how Greek is now neglected and despised. Looking to posterity or the next generation, what motive has one for devotion to study?' " <sup>1</sup>

While Greek was thus at its last gasp in the abode of learning, it is remarkable to find it apparently flourishing amid the villainous and illiterate atmosphere of the theatre. It has been shewn by Mr. J. Churton Collins that Shakespeare was acquainted with the great Greek Tragedies. This cult of the Greek classics was, as we shall see, shared by Shakespeare's disreputable compeers.

All testimony tends to shew that in the age of Shakespeare the Universities, so far from being depositories of all science and all learning, had fallen to be mere elementary and badly conducted schools, wanting, as Peter Martyr said, in loyalty, in teachers, and even in any hope for learning.

At the age of fifteen, Francis Bacon entreated to be removed from Cambridge as he had acquired 'everything the University had to teach!

The easiest means to attain distinction were Theology and Disputation. These two subjects, conceived and handled in a mean and intolerant spirit, absorbed the best brain power of the country. Mullinger states that the Universities "came to be regarded as little more than seminaries for the education of the Clergy of the Established Church." To what a depth of degradation the Priesthood had fallen will be seen later.

Of the rabble, who mainly constituted the

<sup>1</sup> *History of Cambridge.* Vol. 2, p. 420.

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student class, the future career is ominously foreshadowed by the fact that, the Poor Law of 1572, aiming at the suppression of the beggars and vagrants that swarmed over the face of the country, included in the term vagabond, "*scholars of the Universities begging without license from the University Authorities.*"<sup>1</sup> This in all probability is the reason why Travers characterised the Colleges as trees not merely sterile but diffusing a deadly miasma around. They appear to have served as a prolific seeding ground for the spirit of disputation which fruited in the religious horrors of the time, and is manifest today in the variety of sects by which Christendom is distracted.

It is mentioned by Defoe that during his lifetime, thirty thousand stout fellows were ready and anxious to lay down their lives for "No Popery," not knowing for a certainty whether Popery was a man or a horse. If we imagine in an earlier and coarser period the effect of a fractionally educated rabble, equipped with a beggars' license, scattered over the length of the land shouting their shibboleths at 'Prophecyings' and such like disorderly gatherings, it will go far to explain the ferocities of witch-finding and the excesses which polluted the name of Religion. This inference is confirmed by a passage put into the mouth of *George Pyeboard* in the *psuedo-Shakespearean* play *The Puritan*.<sup>2</sup> *George Pyeboard* is unquestionably *George Peele*, a baker's pieboard still being sometimes called a "peel."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Social England*, Traill. Vol. 3, p. 756.

<sup>2</sup> Act I, Sc. 2 (1607).

<sup>3</sup> (*Paille* Fr. instrument de pâtissier).

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“The multiplicity of scholars, hatch’d and nourish’d in the idle calms of peace, makes them, like fishes, one devour another ; and the community of learning has so played upon affections, that thereby almost Religion is come about to phantasy and discredited by being too much spoken of, in so many and mean mouths.”

(Act 1 Sc. 2).

In one of Harvey’s letters to Spenser we have an interesting sidelight on the state of affairs at Cambridge.

“Aristotle much named but little read ; Xenophon and Plato reckoned amongst discoursers and conceited, superficial fellows ; much verbal and sophistical jangling ; little subtle and effectual disputing.... In no age so little so much made of ; every one highly in his own favour.... The Gospel taught not learnt ; charity cold.... the moral abandoned ; ‘*The Light, the Light*’ in every man’s lips, but mark their eyes and you will say they are rather like owls than eagles.”<sup>1</sup>

“What is most of our philosophy,” asks Burton in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, “but a labyrinth of opinions, idle questions, propositions and metaphysical terms ?”

I cannot resist quoting an amusing skit on contemporary learning that occurs in a manuscript play written about 1600.<sup>2</sup>

### SCENE III.

Enter *Hermogenes*, *Stilpo*, and *Speusippus* in gowns.

<sup>1</sup> *Spenser*. Dean Church, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Timon of Athens* in Dyce Collection, reprinted in *Cassell’s National Library* with Shakespeare’s *Timon*.

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*Her.* "Most graue philosophers, your company doth much delight mee; truly, I doe loue your witty disputations.

*Stil.* A man may loue two manner of waies, effectiuely, or causally.

*Her.* I pray thee, giue mee these 2 termes.

*Stil.* Noe, a talente shall not buy them.

*Her.* There is a question that long hath troubled mee,—whether there be a man in the moone?

*Speus.* To wit, a numerically indiuiduall, which may haue there really and intrinsically an entitatiue acte and essence besides a formall existence; or whether that bee Platoes Idea abstracted from the humane species, which they affirme to bee vnder the concaue of the moone?

*Stil.* The moone may bee taken 4 manner of waies; either specificatiuely, or quidditatiuely, or superficially, or catapodially.

*Her.* To morrow, if Joue please, Ile buy these termes!

*Stil.* The man in the moone is not in the moone superficially, although he bee in the moone (as the Greekes will haue it) catapodially, specificatiuely, and quidditatiuely.

*Speus.* I proue the contrary to thee thus. Whatsoever is moued to the motion of the moone, is in the moone superficially; but the man in the moone is moued to the motion of the moone; *ergo* the man in the moone really exists in the moone superficially.

*Stil.* I answeere by distinguishing. The man in the moone is moued to the motion of the moone according to a formall conceipte, æquiuocally and virtually, not entitatiue vnivocally

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and naturally ; it is true respectiely and *vt quo*, but not simply and *vt quod*.

*Her.* Stilpo, how wilt thou sell these articles of distinction ?

*Stil.* For £20.

*Her.* For such trifles ! how deare are thy wares ! wilt take 16 ?

*Stil.* Dost thinke Philosophy is soe little worth ? I cannot.

*Her.* Bee it so ; because these phrases please me, and their terminations ende all alike, thou shalt haue £20. Repeate them againe.

*Stil.* A thinge may be moued entitatiuely or formally—

*Her.* Entitatiuely or formally ! I pray thee, resolute mee of that scruple,—am I moued entitatiuely or formally ?

*Speus.* Thou art moued formally, prioristically in the thing considered, not posterioristically in the manner of considering.”

Awake to the pedantic follies of his contemporaries Bacon, in *The Advancement of Learning*, writes.

There are three distempers of learning ; effeminate learning ; contentious learning and fantastical learning.....

This same unprofitable subtlety or curiosity is of two sorts, either in the subject itself which they handle, when it is fruitless speculations or controversy, whereof there are no small number both in Divinity and Philosophy ..... For, were it not better for a man in a fair room to set up one great light ..... than to go about *with a small watchcandle into every corner* ? And such is their method that rests not so much upon evid-

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ence of truth ... as upon particular confutations and solutions of every scruple, cavillation and objection ; breeding for the most part one question as fast as it solveth another, even as in the former semblance when you carry the light into one corner you darken the rest."

It was to rid Learning of these follies and to bring in a saner and more utile scheme of Philosophy, that Bacon concentrated his giant energies. "If," said he, "I could purge it of two sorts of rovers whereof the one with frivolous disputations, confutations and verbosities ; the other with blind experiments and auricular traditions and impostures hath committed so many spoils ; I hope I could bring in industrious observations, grounded conclusions and profitable inventions and discoveries." <sup>1</sup> In the *Novum Organum* he again reiterates his great utilitarianism—"The real and legitimate goal of the Sciences is the endowment of human life with new inventions and riches. The great crowd of teachers know nothing of this but consist of dictatorial hirelings." <sup>2</sup>

In this contest with Authority, Bacon seems to have enlisted the support of the playhouses. It will be observed how the dramatists go out of their way to tilt at *plodders* who derive their base authority from books. "His Lordship," we are told by Rawley, "had not his knowledge from books but from some grounds or notions from within himself. *He was no plodder upon books.*" <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Burleigh 1591.

<sup>2</sup> Bk. I. LXXXI.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*.

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We silly souls are only *plodders* at *ergo*, whose wits are clasped up with our books, and so full of learning are we at home that we scarce know good manners when we come abroad. Cunning in nothing but in making small things great by figures, pulling on with the sweat of our studies a great shoe upon a little foot, *burning out one candle in seeking for another*, raw worldings in matters of substance, passing wranglers about shadows.

LYLY (*Endymion* I. 4.) 1591.

The wit and mind of man.... if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh its web, then it is endless and *brings forth indeed cobwebs* of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

Men that removed from their inkhorn terms  
Brings forth no action worthy of their bread.

NASH (*Summers Last Will*) 1592-1600.

Small have continual *plodders* ever won  
Save base authority from others books

He *draweth out the thread* of his verbosity  
Finer than the staple of his argument.  
I abhor such fantastical phantasms !

SHAKESPEARE (*Love's Labour's Lost*  
I. I. & v. I.) 1598.

A fantastical scholar like such who study to know how many knots was in Hercules club ; of what colour Achilles beard was, or whether Hector were not troubled with the toothache. He hath studied himself half blear-eyed to know the true symmetry of Cæsars nose



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by a *shoeing horn*<sup>1</sup>, and this he did to gain the name of speculative man.

WEBSTER (*Malfi* III. 3.) 1616-1623.

Some philosophers and a few critics, one of which critics hath lost his flesh with fishing at the measure of Plautus' verses; another has vowed to get the consumption of the lungs, or to leave to posterity the true orthography and pronunciation of laughing. A third hath melted a great deal o'sweat, worn out his thumbs with turning, read out his eyes, and studied his face out of a sanguine into a meagre, spawling, fleamy loathsomeness, and all to find out why *mentula* should be the feminine gender since the rule is etc.

MARSTON (*The Fawn* IV. 4.) 1606.

Among the melancholy pickstraws that for a long period seriously engaged the attention of the erudite was a problem as to the exact number of Angels that could stand on the point of a needle. It was not until a far later date that Learning emerged from the slough in which it was so lamentably engulfed. Hobbes never opened Euclid until he was past forty; while he was at Oxford, Geometry formed no part of the student's training. It was in fear lest the mathematic studies should "utterly sink into oblivion" that in 1619 the professorships of Geometry and Astronomy were instituted by Sir Henry Savile, upon which Osborn relates "not a few of the then foolish gentry" kept back their sons

<sup>1</sup> Compare Lyly, "*pulling on with the sweat of our studies a great shoe upon a little foot.*" What is the connection between Cæsar's nose and a shoehorn?

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from the university lest they should be "smutted with the black art," mathematics being regarded as "Spells" and its professors "limbs of the devil."

Speaking of Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors*, Mr Edmund Gosse observes, "We are too apt to suppose that in exposing vulgar errors Browne was attacking the errors of the vulgar. But this was not the case; he did not venture down into the vast hollows of popular superstition and ignorance. The tales he refutes are often so monstrous that we easily fancy that they must have been those of the unthinking masses but Brown particularly says that he has not addressed his pen or style 'unto the people,—whom books do not address, and who are in this way incapable of reduction,—but unto the knowing and leading part of Learning.' Certainly a perusal of this volume may give us an astounding idea of what professors of both Universities, clergymen, doctors, lawyers, and squires believed and perpetuated in the way of superstition while Charles I was still upon the throne of England. If Browne's light sometimes seems glimmering to us, like that twilight which astronomers say is all that illuminates the planet Jupiter at high noon, what are we to think of the darkness of his contemporaries? The obstinate fault they all indulged was the habit of saying, 'Such and such thing is not, because Pliny says it is not.' But it moves and grows at your very door; look and see!—'I will not look; Pliny says it is not, therefore it cannot be.' It was Browne's aim to awaken an intellectual conscience in the learned men of his time, and to prove to them that

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they were doing a grave wrong to the race by shutting their eyes against the truth thus obstinately." <sup>1</sup>

On the Continent things were no better. At the Universities of Strasburg, Geneva, Heidelberg, and Leyden, dogma had usurped the place of knowledge ; learning was "in abeyance."

At Paris, amid the furious strife between the Guises and The League, Learning was so silenced that in 1584 Royalty itself uttered a formal lament over the University's disorganisation and its pitiable condition.

The student of the history of science, who, as Mullinger observes, amid the wearying strifes of theologians and the ceaseless reiteration of dogma, seeks to discern the glimmerings of a more real knowledge which should benefit the human race, is compelled reluctantly to admit that whatever was achieved—at any rate at Cambridge—was the outcome of isolated genius rising superior to the prevailing influences of its surroundings.

<sup>1</sup> (*English Men of Letters*; Sir T. Browne pp. 75-76).

## CHAPTER IV

### ECCLESIASTICISM

Bad as was the state of learning in the Elizabethan era, the state of Religion was even worse: according to Robert Burton, it was "miserable and distressed." In their determination to eradicate abuses the Reformers seem to have uprooted wheat and tares together; raising such a tempest of Controversy that Charity was overclouded, and almost lost.

The endeavour to enforce the acknowledgment of Queen Elizabeth as Supreme Governor of the Church in England, led to many parish priests relinquishing, or being evicted from, their benefices; but the troubles of this period were trifling in comparison with the misery caused a few years later (1583-85) by Whitgift's attempts to enforce uniformity. "How many godly, able, painful Ministers were outed all over England, I cannot tell," writes a pamphleteer in 1681 "but *ex ungue leonem*, I have seen a MS. which gives an account of the names of sixty odd in Suffolk, twenty-one in Lincolnshire, sixty-four in Norfolk, thirty-eight in Essex; which, though they seem comparatively few, yet are a great many when we consider that in Essex at that time, there was an account given of 163 Ministers that never

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preach'd, only read Prayers and Homilies, and 85 more, Pluralists, Non-residents, or persons most notoriously debauched." <sup>1</sup>

To replace the evicted non-conformers was found to be impracticable, and consequently parish after parish was left abandoned and forlorn. Some authorities assert that, out of a total of nine thousand benefices, *one half* were unoccupied and unserved during Elizabeth's reign; others place the total even higher. In a paper drawn up by Sir F. Knollys in 1584, it is asserted that "It is impossible to have so manye preachers as this byll [against pluralism and non-residence] doth require resydent, because there be nine thousand parishes, and *but three thousand preachers in the realme.*" <sup>2</sup>

The lack of teaching and the want of discipline had their inevitable results. Strype in his *Annals* records that the "abundance of parishes utterly destitute of ministers" led to "no small apprehension that in time a great part of the nation would become pagans." <sup>3</sup>

Sampson's "Supplicatory to the Queen" quoted in Strype's *Annals*, <sup>4</sup> sets forth that "There are whole thousands of us left untaught; yea, by trial it will be found that there are in England whole thousands of parishes destitute of this necessary help to salvation, that is a diligent preaching and teaching."

<sup>1</sup> *History of Conformity, or the Proof of the Mischief of Impositions from the Experience of More than One Hundred Years.* London: Printed by A. Maxwell and R. Roberts, 1681, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *A Book about the Clergy.* J. C. Jeaffreson, Vol. II. London, 1870 p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. I. pp. 512, 513. Oxford, 1824.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. III. Part 1, p. 327. Oxford, 1824.

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From all parts of England arose similar reports of the prevailing desolation and brutality. The Bishop of Hertford wrote to Cecil in 1561 that his Diocese was "a very nurserye of blasphemy, whordom, pryde, superstition and ignorance."<sup>1</sup> In 1583 the Bishop of St Davids reported that there was now little Popery, but that the people were "greatly infected with atheism and wonderfully given over to vicious life."<sup>2</sup> Dr Chaderton, of Litchfield, wrote plaintively about the same time that he considered his Diocese to be "the very sink of the whole realm both for corrupt religion and life."<sup>3</sup>

The dearth of clergy was unhappily in no way counter balanced by mental ability. Mr. Cordy Jeaffreson tells us that "Of the hundred and sixteen clergymen of the Archdeaconry of London, in the year 1563, forty-two were almost Latinless, thirteen had no tincture of classic learning whatever, and four were '*indocti*'—so uniformly ignorant and untrained, that their tenure of clerical offices was scandalous..... In the letter in which he communicated these facts to Samuel Pepys in 1696, Edmund, then Domestic Chaplain of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and subsequently Bishop of Lincoln, observed, 'If the London clergy were thus ignorant, what must we imagine the country divines were?'"<sup>4</sup>

It happens we are not left solely to the imagination. There is abundant evidence that the bulk of the country clergy were men of low

1 "State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth." Vol. 17, No. 32.

2 "State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth." Vol. 162, No. 29.

3 Strype's *Annals*, Vol. 3, Part 1, p. 35. Oxford, 1824.

4 *A Book about the Clergy*, p. 286, Vol. 11.

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caste, ignorant, and immoral. Although two out of every three Churches were deserted, and falling into decay, the crying want of clergy forced the Reformers to muster together a veritable Falstaff's army of undesirables. Among them we read were "tinkers, tapsters, fiddlers, and pipers."<sup>1</sup>

Archbishop Jewel admits that many Ministers were made from "the basest sort of people." Cardinal Allen characterised the Elizabethan clergy as "the very refuse of the worst sort of men." Richard Baxter<sup>2</sup> describing the vicious condition of affairs tells us that he lived, "in a country that had but little preaching at all."

"In the village where I was born" says he, "there were four readers successively in six years' time; ignorant men, and two of them immoral in their lives, who were all my schoolmasters. In the village where my father lived, there was a reader of about eighty years of age that never preached, and had two Churches about twenty miles distant. His eyesight failing him, he said Common Prayer without a book; but for the reading of the Psalms and Chapters, he got a common thresher and day-labourer one year, and a taylor another year (for the clerk could not read well); and at last he had a kinsman of his own (the excellentest stage-player in all the country, and a good gamester and good fellow), that got Orders and supplied one of his places. After him another young kinsman, that could write and read, got orders; and at the same time another neighbour's son that had been a

<sup>1</sup> Holinshed's *Chronicle*; Elizabethan England. *Scott Library*. London, pp. 74-76.

<sup>2</sup> Born 1615, died 1707.

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while at school turned Minister, and who would needs go further than the rest, ventured to preach (and after got a living in Staffordshire.) And, when he had been a preacher about twelve or sixteen years he was fain to give over, it being discovered that his Orders were forged by the first ingenious stage-player. After him another neighbour's son took orders when he had been awhile an attorney's clerk and a common drunkard, and tipleed himself into so great poverty that he had no other way to live. It was feared that he and more of them came by their Orders the same way with the afore-mentioned person. These were the schoolmasters of my youth (except two of them); who read Common Prayer on Sundays and Holy-days, and taught school, and tipleed on the week-days and whipt the boys when they were drunk, so that we changed them very oft. Within a few miles about us, were near a dozen more Ministers that were near eighty year old a-piece, and never preached; poor ignorant readers, and most of them of scandalous lives; only three or four constant, competent preachers lived near us, and those (though conformable, all save one) were the common marks of the people's obloquy and reproach, and any that had but gone to hear them, when he had no preaching at home, was made the derision of the vulgar rabble, under the odious name of a Puritane." <sup>1</sup>

Such being the status of the Clergy it is not surprising that their neglected flocks behaved like barbarians. Ribaldry and profanity ran riot.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in "*A Book about the Clergy*," vol. 2, p 185.



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“It doth too evidently appear,” says a contemporary observer, “that God is more dishonoured and the devil better served on the Sunday than upon all the days in the week beside.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1578 the schoolmaster of Tonbridge deplored that the greater part of Sunday was, “horrible prophaned by divellishe inventions; as with Lords of Misrule, Morice dauncers, May games, insomuch that in some places they shame not in ye time of divine service to come and daunce aboute the Church, and without to have men naked dauncing in nettes, which is most filthie.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1586 the immorality in London was so prodigious that Bishop Aylmer, with a view to averting the wrath of God, ordered the Communion Service to be read more frequently. “Many churches,” says Goadby, “were closed, and there were hundreds of parishes without incumbents, devoting the Sunday to sports and licentiousness. The windows of the sacred edifices were broken, the doors were unhinged, the walls in decay, the very roofs stripped of their lead. ‘The Book of God,’ says Stubbes, ‘was rent, ragged and all betorn.’ Aisles, naves, and chancels were used for stabling horses. Armed men met in the churchyard and wrangled, or shot pigeons with hand-guns. Pedlars sold their wares in the church porches during service. Morrice-dancers excited inattention and wantonness by their presence in costume, so as to be ready for the frolics which generally followed prayers. ‘Many there are,’ said Sandys preaching before Elizabeth, even after her reforms, ‘that hear not a sermon’

<sup>1</sup> See *A Book about the Clergy*, vol. 2, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Arber Reprints*. Vol. 3, p. 9.

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in seven years, I might say in seventeen.' Several towns and cities were notoriously irreligious. In the city of York, according to Drake, the Reformation 'went so far as almost to put an end to religion.' ..... The Church ales, in which God's house was turned into a drinking shop for profit—the ale having been brewed by the Churchwardens for sale—led to abominable orgies." <sup>1</sup>

In *Every Man Out of his Humour*, Ben Jonson throws a side light upon the condition into which St. Paul's Cathedral had fallen. *Scene 1 of Act III* is placed in the "Middle Aisle of St. Paul's," generally known as Paul's Walk.

*Orange* : "What, Signor Whiffe! What fortune has brought you into these West parts?"

*Shift* : "Troth, signor! nothing but your rheum. I have been taking an ounce of tobacco hard by here with a gentleman, and I am come to spit private in Paul's."

"To spit private in Paul's!" What golden times were these when the interior of the Cathedral served for such uses? In a pamphlet written by Pilkington, Bishop of Durham, he makes the assertion that, "no place hath been more abused than Paul's hath been..... The South alley was for usury and popery, the North for simony, and the horsefair in the midst for all kinds of bargains; ordinary payments of money as well known to all men as the beggar knows his dish..... Without and within, above the ground and under, over the roof and beneath, from the top of the steeple and spire down to

<sup>1</sup> *The England of Shakespeare.* (Goadby), pp. 77-88.

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the low floor, not one spot was free from wickedness." <sup>1</sup>

In 1572, we find it recorded of Scotland that, "maintenance of Kirk and poor has gone to profane flatterers at court, ruffians and hirelings; the poor are oppressed with hunger, the Churches decayed for lack of Clergy, the schools utterly neglected, the sacred buildings are like sheep cotes." <sup>2</sup>

So alarming became the state of the country that on all hands the better classes grew disquieted, "gentlemen of all sorts took heart; they pitied their [ejected] ministers, their wives and children," and they delivered frequent petitions to Bishop Whitgift, "craving that in regard to the souls of the people and their own, he would accept such a subscription as the Law expressly appointed, and restore the poor men, both to their preaching and livings." <sup>3</sup>

But with Whitgift "*this second means prevailed with him no more than the first,*" and unless my deductions are erroneous, the Ecclesiastical Authorities preferred to let the country go to rack and ruin rather than suffer it to be educated by a non-conforming Clergy.

In addition to lack of teachers Avarice and Corruption were rampant. Bishoprics were kept empty in order that the Court might absorb their revenues; courtiers added to the prevailing chaos by obtaining grants of five and sometimes six livings, screwing profit out of them by farming them at a miserable pittance to scandalous persons.

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth* (Aiken), p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Social England*. Traill. Vol. III, p. 557.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *The History of Conformity*, 1681; p. 13.

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The Edict of the Royal Commissioners ordering the destruction of all "copes, vestments, albes, missals, books, crosses, and such like idolatrous, and superstitious monuments whatsoever," had the effect of letting loose a torrent of ribaldry, and blasphemy. Many churches were stripped of everything stealable. Organ pipes were melted into household utensils; vestments were cut up into stomachers for parsons' wives, or served as theatrical properties for wandering mountebanks. The expression "Hocus pocus" is a relic of blasphemous parodies of the Mass, being a ribald survival of the priest's words, *Hoc est corpus*, used on the Elevation of the Host. Altar stones were employed as pig-styes, or put to even baser uses. Roofs were widely destroyed by being stripped for their lead, and dead bodies were thrown out of their coffins for the sake of their leaden wrappings. These acts were not merely the excesses of an ignorant mob, or of a few frenzied fanatics. They were the duly sanctioned policy of the people's spiritual leaders. Archbishop Grindal is, for instance, particular in enjoining that "The churchwardens shall see that the altar stones be broken, defaced, and *bestowed to some common use.*"<sup>1</sup>

The Dean of Durham used the stone coffins of the Priors of Durham, whom he termed "Servants of the Synagogue of Satan," as swine troughs, and the brass holy water stoups of the Cathedral as kitchen utensils. The character of too many of the Elizabethan prelates appears to have been coarse, insolent and brutal. They

<sup>1</sup> *Injunctions of Edmund Grindal* (1571). London: William Serres.

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seem to have moulded their manners too much upon the unfavourable side of the character of Martin Luther. Luther, it will be remembered termed schoolmen "locusts, caterpillars, frogs, and lice." Reason he denounced as the "Arch whore" and the "Devil's bride." Aristotle was a "Prince of Darkness, horrid impostor, public and professed liar, beast, and twice execrable."<sup>1</sup> We find Thomas à Becket referred to by the Bishop of Durham as a "stinking martyr."<sup>2</sup> Bishop Bale terms the old clergy "puffed up porklings of the Pope." His love of alliteration led this prelate into remarkable phraseology, as, for instance :—

"Let beastly blind babblers and bawds with their charming chaplains then prate at large out of their malicious spirit and idle brains."<sup>3</sup>

Roman Catholic Bishops, in the estimation of Bishop Bale, were : —

"Two-horned whoremongers, conjurors of Egypt, and lecherous locusts leaping out of the smoke of the pit bottomless."<sup>4</sup>

The Bishop of Hereford indulged in "cholerick oaths and manifold rare upbraidings." The Bishop of Carlisle deemed Roman Catholic priests "Impes of Antichrist."<sup>5</sup> Among the Elizabethan clergy were men such as the judicious Hooker, but the demeanour of many of these Ecclesiastics arouses a suspicion that Shakespeare had them in his eye when he wrote,

<sup>1</sup> See *Pioneers of Evolution* (Clodd), p. 81. Richards. London, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> *Pilkington's Works*, Parker Society. London, 1842.

<sup>3</sup> *Bale's Works*, p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>5</sup> *State Papers Domestic* (Elizabeth), vol. xvii.

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“ Man, proud man,  
Drest in a little briefe authoritie ;  
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,  
(His glassie essence) like an angry ape,  
Plaies such phantastique tricks before high heaven  
As makes the angels weepe. ”<sup>1</sup>

The editor of the Works of Bishop Bale has registered his conviction that certain of them “ could not with propriety be presented to the public,” but the style and sentiments of this particular Bishop do not seem to have been singular or peculiar. The shouting of the captains was, almost everywhere, very shrill and very strident. Among the dialectics to be found in the religious literature of this time there abound such flowers of fancy as, “ The whore of Babylon's chemise ” [the surplice] ; “ Antichrist's shyrte ” [*Ibid*] ; “ Little Jack in the Box ” [The Host] ; “ Abbey lubbers ; ” “ Massmongers ; ” “ Apes of Antichrist ” [Priests], and so forth.

The actions of the authorities towards recusants and those who failed to attend the reformed services were merciless in their severity.

“ At any moment one was liable to be arrested and hurried off before the appointed Courts, to be interrogated on oath as to whether or not they had been to Church ; where, when, and how often, they had received the Lord's Supper, and whether they held the parson's certificate that this had been publicly done. If not, they were condemned as recusants to fines and imprisonment. ... To know that a priest was at a certain place, and not to seize or betray

<sup>1</sup> *Measure for Measure*, 11, 2.

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him was a crime. To give him food, shelter or money, was also a crime. To remain away from the services of the desolate and ruined Churches was a crime ; torture, imprisonment, and death, were the punishments. ”<sup>1</sup>

Under the laws against recusancy acts of a pestilent character were systematically practised. The wealthier recusants were fined until they recanted, or their estates were absorbed. They were then imprisoned or banished. Of the poorer recusants, the prisons and dungeons were “ full of all sorts, old and young men, wives, widows, and maids. ” Batches of these unfortunates were tried at a time. On one occasion as many as 203 were condemned in the course of three days. Men and women were stripped to the waist, flogged till their blood flowed, bored through the ears with a red-hot iron, and turned adrift to swell the appalling roll of wandering and starving outcasts. It will be remembered that the name of Shakespeare’s father was returned as that of a recusant. It appears, however, that in his case it was not a question of conscience, but of a coyness to appear in public “ for fear of process for debt. ” In 1635 the Ecclesiastical commissioners suspended the Vicar of Stratford for “ grossly particularising in his sermons for suffering his poultry to roost and his hogs to lodge in the chancel. ”<sup>2</sup>

Punishment was sternly and swiftly dealt out to all stragglers from the narrow and perpetually

<sup>1</sup> *The Church under Queen Elizabeth* (Lee), vol. II, p. 4. London 1880.

<sup>2</sup> *William Shakespeare His family and Friends.* (Elton), p. 233.

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shifting path of orthodoxy. "The spirit of Calvinistic Presbyterianism," says Green, "excluded all toleration of practice or belief..... For heresy there was the punishment of death. Never had the doctrine of persecution been urged with such a blind and reckless ferocity." <sup>1</sup>

The Government inquisitors were authorized to use "such torture as is usual for the better understanding of the truth." <sup>2</sup> They did so, and the acts that resulted challenge comparison with the iniquities of Nero and Torquemada.

Limbs were racked, and legs were pulped ; men were nailed to the pillory and left to free themselves by cutting off their ears with their own hands ; needles were driven into the finger-tips between the nails and the flesh, and abominations too horrible for detail were widely practiced.

Those who suffered death for their convictions were executed under fiendish conditions. Heretics were burnt alive "with roaring and crying." For the offence of refusing to plead on being charged with harbouring priests, permitting Mass to be said in her husband's house, and sending her son abroad to be educated in a foreign seminary, a lady of thirty was condemned to death in the following form :—

"Margaret Clitheroe. Having refused to put yourself to the country, this must be your sentence. You must return from whence you came, and there in the lowest part of the prison be stripped naked, laid down with your back upon the ground and as much weight

<sup>1</sup> *Short History*, p. 469.

<sup>2</sup> *State Papers Domestic* (Elizabeth), vol. ccxxx, p. 646.



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laid upon you as you are able to bear, and so to continue three days without meat or drink except a little barley-bread and puddle-water ; and the third day, your hands and feet being tied to posts and a sharp stone being put under your back, you are to be pressed to death."

The more usual method of execution was, however, to hang the victim by the neck, cut him down, and, while yet alive and conscious, rake out his heart and entrails, and fling them into a cauldron of boiling tar, or water. As a special privilege the condemned man sometimes begged that he "might not be bowelled ere he was dead."

On the gateways and bridges were collected the loathsome trophies of human heads, boiled, tarred, and weatherworn. In 1582 executions were so frequent that complaint was made that London was "but as one shambles for human flesh."

## CHAPTER V

### RELIGION

I have dilated enough on these "stupend and exquisite torments." Amid such a conflict the waters of Truth were necessarily churned and trampled into a repulsive mud. Men's doctrines were as monstrous as their actions. "Give me but a little leave," says Robert Burton, "and I will set before your eyes in brief a stupend, vast, infinite Ocean of incredible madness and folly; a sea full of shelves and rocks, sands, gulfs, Euripuses, and contrary tides, full of fearful monsters, uncouth shapes, roaring waves, tempests, and Siren calms, Halcyonian Seas, unspeakable misery, such Comedies and Tragedies, such absurd and ridiculous, feral and lamentable fits, that I know not whether they are more to be pitied or dirided,"<sup>1</sup>

Truth and Purity, being exiled from their birth-right, seem to have taken refuge on what Taine referring to the Elizabethan Stage, truly characterises as a "dunghill." "Stage plays," says a contemporary, "serve for nothing but to nourish filthyness, and where they are most used there filthyness is most practised."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Part. III. Sec. IV. Mem. I. Subs 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Exposition of Ten Commandments*, R. Cleaver, 1615, p. 299.

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“In plays and interludes,” says Stubbes, <sup>1</sup> “there is nothing but blasphemy scurrility and whoredom maintained.” “The blessed word of God is to be handled reverently, gravely and sagely, not scoffingly, floutingly and gibingly as it is upon stages without any reverence, worship or veneration. The Word of our Salvation.... were not given to be derided and jested at as they be in these filthy plays.”

Bishop Babington in 1588, described stage plays as “most horrible spectacles,” adding, “these players behaviour polluteth all things, their plays feasts of Satan and inventions of the Devil.” <sup>2</sup> The author of *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plays and Theatres* (1580) alludes to the playhouses as “Chappels of Satan.” “The staggers are,” says he, “commonly such kind of men in their conversation as they are in profession,” mockers and flowters of the Deity, exercised in practising wickedness, “making that an art to the end they might the better gesture it in their parts. For who can better play the ruffian than the verie ruffian?”

We might suspect this and other testimony but for its unanimity and for the fact that the players, to a considerable extent on their own shewing, were “verie ruffians.” “No figure,” says a modern historian, better paints the debauchery and scepticism of the group of young playwrights than Robert Greene. “Hell and the afterworld were the butts of his ceaseless mockery. If he had not feared the judges of the Queen’s Courts

<sup>1</sup> *Anatomy of Abuses.*

<sup>2</sup> N. S. Society’s Publications vi. 6., p. 83

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more than he feared God, he said in bitter jest, he should often have turned cutpurse." <sup>1</sup>

Yet, if they led the lives of ghouls, it is nevertheless clear that the players spoke with the tongues of Archangels. Alluding to Shakespeare, a modern writer has observed, "He taught the Divineness of Forgiveness, perpetual Mercy, constant Patience, endless Peace, perpetual Gentleness. If you can show me one who knew things better than this man, show him! I know him not! If he had appeared as a Divine they would have burned him; as a Politician they would have beheaded him; but Destiny made him a Player."

No one knew things "better than" Shakespeare, but many others were at work at the same task and were insinuating the same lessons. They began with the fundamental verity **THOUGHT IS FREE.**

Thought is free.

SHAKESPEARE (*Twelfth Night* I. 3.) 1623  
and (*The Tempest* III. 2.) 1623.

Thought is free.

HEYWOOD (I *Edward IV.*) 1600.

Thought is free.

RANDOLPH (*Muses Looking Glass* IV. 3) 1638.

Thought is free.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Honest Man's Fortune*  
II. 5.) 1613-47.

Thoughts are free.

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* III. 3.) 1613.

Thought's free.

WEBSTER & ROWLEY (*Cure for a Cuckold* II. 2.)  
16.. (?)—1661.

<sup>1</sup> *Short History of English People.* J. R. Green. p. 459.

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When these sentiments were uttered Thought was *not* free : it was cribbed, cabined and confined. When it attempted to flutter from its prison it was struck down by the relentless claws of Authority. In the freeing of Thought perhaps no man did more than Francis Bacon. Among his unpublished manuscripts we find a note, "Thought is free" (*Promus*. 1594). In his *Numismata* Evelyn states, "By standing up against the dogmatists Bacon emancipated and set free Philosophy." It was recently observed by an *Athenæum* critic that, "There is still, in spite of all the work that has been done, a lingering superstition that Puritanism was in its essence a movement towards freedom and tolerance so that it is well to have the truth once more stated. Freedom was the result of the internecine quarrels between the sects, or rather of the fact that no one party was able to exterminate the other. It was not the deliberate conquest of a party devoted to reason, but the fruit derived by all parties from the failure of others." As Mr W. H. Frere points out in his *History of the English Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I*. Puritanism was not a movement for liberty of opinion or practice, but merely for the substitution of a new coercive system in place of the old one.

It would thus appear that, like the Babes in the Wood, Science and Religion escaped while their jailors were at heart grips ; and, as we shall see, the little waifs ran off and took refuge in the Bankside slums.

"If," says the author of *The Church under Elizabeth* "unpopularity met any man of rank or

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mark ; if, in the hearing of a spy of Cecil's or of some long-eared and contemptible informer, he uttered a word or sentence which might be twisted and turned against him, or if the Queen found him less pliant or obsequious than she thought he ought to be, he stood henceforth in the greatest danger of liberty, or life. Both those who adhered to the old religion, and those who were for proceeding further along the road of reform alike suffered." <sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the perils surrounding reformers, the illustrious Bacon drew up (probably some time during 1589) *An Advertisement touching the Controversies of The Church of England*. This hazardous and futile attempt to throw oil on troubled waters reads like the production of a man of sixty ; strangely unlike that of a brilliant and ambitious young courtier of twenty eight.

In later years Bacon again intervened by a second tract, entitled, *Certain Considerations touching the better Pacification and Edification of the Church of England*, wherein *inter alia* he attacks non-residence and pluralism.

In his old age we find him writing : —

“Remember, O Lord, how Thy servant hath walked before Thee ; remember what I have first sought and what hath been principal in my intentions. I have loved Thy assemblies. I have mourned for the divisions of Thy Church. I have delighted in the brightness of Thy Sanctuary.... The state of the poor and oppressed have been precious in mine eyes. I have

<sup>1</sup> Vol I. p. 282.

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hated all cruelty and hardness of heart. I have though in a despised weed, procured the good of all men."

"Controversies on speculative points of theology seem," says Macaulay, "to have engaged scarcely any portion of his attention. In what he wrote on Church Government he showed, as far as he dared, a tolerant and charitable spirit. He troubled himself not at all about Homoousians, and Homoiousians, Monothelites and Nestorians. He lived in an age in which disputes on the most subtle points of divinity excited an intense interest throughout Europe, and nowhere more than in England. He was placed in the very thick of the conflict. He was in power at the time of the Synod of Dort, and must for months have been daily deafened with talk about Election, Reprobation, and final Perseverance. Yet we do not remember a line in his works from which it can be inferred that he was either a Calvinist or an Arminian. While the world was resounding with the noise of a disputatious Philosophy and a disputatious Theology, the Baconian school like Alworthy seated between Square and Thwackum, preserved a calm neutrality, half scornful, half benevolent, and, content with adding to the sum of practical good, left the war of words to those who liked it."

In this attitude of scornful, benevolent neutrality, the players were as equally great as Bacon. The creed of Shakespeare has ever been a sphinx to enquirers. There is, I am inclined to assert, not a passage in the works of Shakespeare or throughout the whole Elizabethan drama that would lead anyone to suppose its authors had

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ever heard of Election, Predestination, Reprobation, Grace, or any one of the academic questions that perplex Humanity.

The dramatists concurred with Jeremy Taylor that Religion is rather a divine *life* than a divine knowledge ; and with Swedenborg that all Religion has relation to life and that the life of Religion is to do good.

As you have  
A soul moulded from Heaven and do desire  
To have it made a Star there, make the means  
Of your ascent to that celestial height  
Virtue winged with brave action. They draw near  
The nature and the essence of the Gods  
Who imitate their goodness.

MASSINGER (*Emperor of the East* I. 2.) 1630-1632.

They taught that :—

When our souls shall leave this dwelling,  
The glory of one fair and virtuous action  
Is above all the scutcheons on our tomb  
Or silken banners over us.

SHIRLEY (*The Traitor* v. I.) 1631-1635.

They persistently reiterated that man must burnish his own soul.

To curse those stars that men say govern us,  
To rail at Fortune, fall out with my fate,  
And task the general world will help me nothing.  
Alas, I am the same still, neither are they  
Subject to helps or hurts. Our own desires  
Are our own fates, our own stars, all our fortunes  
Which as we sway e' en so abuse or bless us.

BEAUMONT and FLETCHER (*The Chances* II. 3.)

1647.



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Man is his own Star and the soul that can  
Render an honest and a perfect man  
Commands all light, all influence, all fate ;  
Nothing to him falls early or too late.  
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

FLETCHER (EPI : *Honest man's Fortune.*) 1613-47.  
"Good thoughts," say Beaumont and Fletcher,  
"are the noblest companions." <sup>1</sup> In *Appius  
and Virginia* <sup>2</sup> Webster rounds this off with :—

So subtle are thy evils  
In life they'll seem good angels, in death, devils.  
Students of the occult will endorse the truth of  
Dekker's information :—

I'll thus much tell thee. Thou never art so  
[distant  
From an evil spirit but that thy oaths,  
Curses and blasphemies pull him to thine elbow.  
Thou never tell'st a lie but that a devil  
Is within hearing it. Thy evil purposes  
Are ever haunted, but when they come to *act*  
He's then *within thee.*

(*Witch of Edmonton*) 1658.

In the reign of James I players were forbidden under a penalty of £10 to introduce any profane allusions to the Deity. The sublime terms in which the theme is invariably handled would, however, lead one to suppose that never was there the slightest occasion for such a regulation.

Prosper thou Great Existence my endeavours  
as they religiously are undertaken and distant

<sup>1</sup> *Spanish Curate.* II. 2. 1622-1647.

<sup>2</sup> IV. 1. 1654.

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equally from servile gain, or glorious ostentation.

MASSINGER (*Renegado* v. 3.) 1624-1630.

Vouchsafe then, O thou most Almighty Spright !  
From whom all gifts of wit and knowledge flow,  
To shed into my breast some sparkling light  
Of thine eternall Truth, that I may show  
Some little beames to mortall eyes below

SPENSER (*Hymne on Heavenly Beautie*) 1597.

Then help divine Adonai to conduct  
Upon the wings of my well tempered verse  
The hearers minds above the towers of Heaven.

PEELE (*David and Bathsheba*) 1599.

That Supernal Judge that stirs good thoughts.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John* II. 1.) 1623.

That Great Supremacy.

SHAKESPEARE (*Ibid.* III. 1.)

That same Essence hath ordained a law.

ANON (*King John* II. 1) 1591.

For what is misery but want of God  
And God is lost if faith be overthrown.

KYD (*Soliman* IV. 1.) 1599.

In the great hand of God I stand.

SHAKESPEARE (*Macbeth*) 1623.

Therefore I charge thee by the immortal God  
That holds the souls of men within His fist.

GREENE (*Friar Bacon*) 1594.

Submit you to High Providence  
And ever in your noble heart prepense  
That all the sorrow in the world is less  
Than Virtue's might.

SPENSER (*Faerie Queene*) III. II.) 1590-1609.

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O Thou eternal Mover of the Heavens.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry VI.* III. 1.) 1623.

Oh thou Supreme Architect of all, First Mover  
of those tenfold crystal orbs.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

The Eternal framed the firmament.

*Ibid.*

Th' Eternal Power ....

The Great Commander of the world  
The King of Kings; the Glorious God of Heaven.

ANON (*Taming of a Shrew*) 1594.

Thank'ed be Heaven's great Architect

MARLOWE (*Edward II.*) 1593-1598.

Th' Eternal Maker.

SPENSER (*Faerie Queene* III. 4.) 1590-1609.

The Highest.

PEELE (*Edward I.*) 1593.

The Most High.

WEBSTER (*Wyatt*) 1607.

It was regarded by the clergy as their special prerogative to thunder out the wrath and curses of the Lord. There are instances on record of unhappy wretches committing suicide in fear of the realistic horrors painted forth by pulpiteers. Buckle attributes the proverbial dourness of Scotch character to the crushing effect of seventeenth century Theology. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* Burton severely censures the clergy for making Election, Predestination, and Reprobation the themes of their ordinary discourses, terrifying poor harmless people with threats of damnation; "making every small fault and thing indifferent an irremissable offence, they so rend, tear, and

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wound men's consciences that they are almost mad and at their wits end."

This was not the doctrine that was preached by Bacon, nor by Browne, nor in the playhouses. Here, on the contrary, it was taught that the great attribute of God was pity, not revenge.

Mercy is an attribute  
As high as Justice, an essential part  
Of his unbounded goodness Whose divine  
Impression, form, and image, Man should bear.

TOURNEUR (*Atheists Tragedy* III. 4.) 1611.

Judges ought (as far as the Law permitteth) in justice to remember Mercy. ... They should imitate God in whose seat they sit.

BACON (*Essay: Judicature*) 1612.

The attribute  
That speaks his Godhead most is merciful:  
Revenge is proper to the fiends.

MASSINGER & DEKKER (*Virgin Martyr* III. 1.)  
1622.

The great Attribute of God, His Mercy.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE (*Religio Medici*) 1635-1643.

The greatest attribute of God is Mercy.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Lover's Progress*)  
1634-47.

But Mercy is above this sceptred sway  
It is enthroned in the heart of kings  
It is an attribute to God himself.

SHAKESPEARE (*Merchant of Venice* IV. 1.) 1600.

Mercy the precious attribute of Heavens true goodness.

CHAPMAN (*Rev. for Honour* IV. 1.) 1654.

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Be like those powers above, whose place on earth  
You represent ; shew Mercy gracious king  
For they are merciful

MAY (*The Heir* IV.) 1620.

Kings come near in nature  
Unto the gods in being touched with pity.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck*) 1634.

Wilt thou draw near the nature of the Gods ?  
Draw near them then in being merciful.

SHAKESPEARE (*Titus Andronicus* I. 2.) 1594.

Kings approach the nearest unto God  
By giving life and safety unto men.

ANON (*Edward III.* v. 1.) 1596.

The Godlike part of Kings is to forgive.

MARSTON (*Sophonisba* II. 2.) 1606.

The rigour and extremity of law  
Is sometimes too, too bitter ; but we carry  
A chancery of pity in our bosom.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck* II. 2.) 1634.

Fair ey'd pity in his heart did dwell.

GREENE (*Maiden's Dream.*) 1591.

He ... had an aspect as if he pitied men.

BACON (*New Atlantis.*) 1629.

I study pity more than revenge.

MASSINGER (*The Bondman* v. III.) 1623-1624.

Kindness, nobler ever than revenge.

SHAKESPEARE (*A. Y. L. I.* IV. 3.) 1623.

These extracts are the more remarkable inasmuch  
as Drummond of Hawthornden in one of his  
Sonnets affirms that Mercy was banished and Pity  
dead.

All good hath left this age, all tracks of shame ;  
Mercy is banished, and pity dead ;

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Justice, from whence it came, to heaven is fled ;  
Religion, maim'd, is thought an idle name ;  
Faith to distrust and malice hath given place ;  
Envy with poison'd teeth hath friendship torn ;  
Renowned knowledge is a despis'd scorn ;  
Now evil 'tis all evil not to embrace :  
There is no life, save under servile bands ;  
To make desert a vassal to their crimes,  
Ambition with Avarice join hands.

O ever-shameful, O most shameless times !  
Save that sun's light we see, of good hear tell,  
This earth we court so much were very hell.

Another subject upon which the dramatists were strikingly in advance of their contemporaries was Hell and the future state. The orthodox authorities revelled in depicting, an afterworld of "eternal torments, baths of boiling sulphur, vicissitude of fires and then of frosts."

According to a preacher as late as 1722, the Deity's ingenuity in devising unheard of tortures exceeded man's bald imagination as far as Man's intellect falls short of Omnipotent wisdom. One authority maintained Hell to be a material and local fire in the centre of the Earth two hundred miles in diameter. Another argued this local Hell to be far less, "one Dutch mile in diameter all filled with fire and brimstone:" because, as he demonstrates, "that space cubically multiplied will make a sphere able to hold eight hundred thousand millions of damned bodies (allowing each body six foot square) which will abundantly suffice." <sup>1</sup>

Against this gross but prevalent conception

<sup>1</sup> See *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Vol. II, p. 49. York Library.

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Sir Thomas Browne protested. "Men," says he in *Religio Medici*, "commonly set forth the torments of Hell by fire and the extremity of corporeal afflictions, and describe Hell in the same method that Mahomet doth Heaven.... Men speak too popularly who place it in those flaming mountains which to grosser apprehensions represent Hell. The *heart of man is the place the devils dwell in*. I feel sometimes a Hell *within myself*. Lucifer keeps his court in my breast. Legion is revived in me..... Every devil is a Hell unto himself ..... a distracted conscience here is a shadow or introduction unto Hell hereafter."

The enlightened and advanced views of Browne were shared in every detail by the dramatists.

Divines and dying men may talk of Hell,  
But in my heart the several torments dwell.

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* v.) 1613.

Divines and dying men may talk of Hell  
But in my heart her several torments dwell.

SHAKESPEARE (?) (*Yorkshire Tragedy*) 1608.

Divines and dying men may talk of Hell  
But in my heart her several torments dwell.

NASH (*Pierce Penniless*) 1592.

Heaven or Hell... is in thee.

PEELE (*Edward I.*) 1593.

Within me is a Hell.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John* IV. 3.) 1623.

I have Hell within me.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*King and  
No King* III 3.) 1611-19.

How dost thou?

Better than you I fear.

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I hope thou art, for, to be plain with thee,  
Thou art in Hell else. Secret scorching flames,  
That far transcend earthly material fires,  
Are crept in me, and there is no cure.  
Is it not strange ?

*Ibid.*

Your lordship spoke of purgatory : I am now in it.  
BACON (Letter to BUCKINGHAM) 1623.

He in Hell doth lie,  
That lives a loathed life, and wishing  
Cannot die.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* IV. 7.) 1590-1609.

Tortured minds and sick souls... make their  
own Hells.

FLETCHER (*Wife for a Month* II. 2.) 1624-47.

I live in Hell, and several furies vex me.

*(Ibid.)*

*Faustus.* (*To Mephistophilis*).

How comes it then that thou art out of Hell ?

*Meph :* Why this is Hell, nor am I out of it....

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed

In one self place ; for where we are is Hell,

And where Hell is, there must we ever be.

MARLOWE (*Faustus* V.) 1588-1604.

*Iachimo.* (*In Imogen's bedchamber*)

Though this is a heavenly angel, Hell is here.

SHAKESPEARE (*Cymbeline* II. 2.) 1623.

Here, here about, is Hell.

MARSTON (*Malcontent* V. 2.) 1604.

Hell's about me.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Little French Lawyer*

V. I.) 1620-1647.



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Tormented conscience.... that's the Hell indeed.  
DEKKER (*Old Fortunatus* v. 2.) 1600.

That's the sting that pricks,  
My conscience, O that's the Hell my thoughts  
[abhor....  
Hapless man ! these thoughts contain thy Hell.  
GREENE (*Orlando*) 1594.

The Hell of sorrow haunts me up and down...  
Profound Hell was in my thought.  
GREENE (*Never too late*) 1590.

My reason abuseth me, and there's the torment,  
there's the Hell.  
KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* III. 13.) 1594.

Till man knows Hell, he never has firm faith.  
MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* IV.) 1613.

There is no pain at all in dying well,  
And none are lost but those that make their Hell.  
BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Valentinian* IV. 4.)  
1619-1647.

Equally elevated were the dramatists views upon the sexual problem. The Seventh Commandment seems to have sat but lightly on the shoulders of our Elizabethan ancestors ; of the stage players few, if any, were otherwise than "notoriously debauched." The general character of the playhouses is too plainly indicated by contemporary testimony to permit them the smallest benefit of doubt. In 1616-17 the London apprentices—no Puritans—sacked and set fire to the Cockpit theatre. The significance of this incident lies in the fact that Shrovetide was the season when "the flat caps" assumed the ancient privilege of their order to destroy brothels and bagnios.

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When we take into account the ordinary conditions of existence prevailing in even decent society, imagination reels at the enormity of the abuses which raised the offended gorges of the citizens. There exists no better method of gaining an insight into the moral atmosphere of the Elizabethan period than to study the contemporary drama. Many plays are unquestionably transcripts from actual life. Schlegel says without exaggeration that, "the indecencies in which these poets [the Elizabethan dramatists] allowed themselves to indulge, exceed all conception. The licentiousness of the language is the least evil; many scenes, nay, many whole plots, are so contrived that the very idea of them, not to mention the sight, is a gross insult to modesty."

Viewed from a modern standpoint, this is unquestionable; but *as seen by contemporaries, the works in question were monuments of morality and nobleness.* The playwrights themselves evidently did not in the least realise their own impropriety. It is quite customary for plays, which modern taste rightly condemns as disgusting, to be prefixed by an array of testimony from public men to the effect that here will be found "*wit untainted by obscenity,*" that "Plautus and Aristophanes were scurrile wits and buffoons in comparison," that so-and-so writes "strong and clear," that herein

"No vast uncivil bulk swells any scene,  
The strength ingenious and the vigour *clean.*"  
and so forth.

All evidence tends unmistakably to prove that unnatural horrors, from which the modern mind recoils with disgust, were, in the Elizabethan and Jacobean

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period, matters of commonplace occurrence, and considered as fit themes for dramatisation.

The main jest of the period appears to have been to "adhorn" or "cornute" one's neighbour. Chapman in *All fools* (1605) writes bitterly; "The course of the world (like the life of man) is said to be divided into several ages. As we into infancy, childhood, youth, and so forward to old age, so the world into the Golden Age, the Silver, the Brass, the Iron, the Leaden, the Wooden, and now into this present age, which we term the *Horned Age* [*italics Chapman's*], not that but our former ages have enjoyed this benefit as well as our times, but that in ours it is more common."

On St Luke's Day (St Luke was the patron saint of Cuckolds!) there was held an orgie known as Horn Fair. Unless the dramatists grossly misrepresent the women of the period, modesty was so rare a virtue as to be almost unknown. It is pathetically funny to observe how, almost invariably in the Elizabethan drama, any woman, who repels an admirer's advances, is hailed in a flowery oration as a miracle of virtue, a very Phœnix of the age, the sole Arabian bird, a Nonpareil at whose name future generations will incredulously wonder.

Marston in *The Scourge of Villainy* (1599) writes;—

"O split my heart, lest it do break with rage,  
To see th' immodest looseness of our age!  
Immodest looseness? Fie! too gentle word!  
When every sign can brothelery afford,  
When lust doth sparkle from our females' eyes,  
And modesty is routed to the skies."

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Spenser bewails the "ugly barbarism and brutish ignorance" of his times, and refers to the world as "a den of wickedness, deformed with filth and foul iniquity."

The anonymous author of *Timon of Athens* (1600) writes:—"Earth's worse than Hell; let Hell change place with Earth." Nash, in *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, published in the same year (1600), utters the same thought, "Earth is Hell, true Hell felicity compared with this world, this den of wolves." "I wish myself a beast," says Dekker, "because men are so bad that beasts excel them in goodness." The author of *Willobie & his Avisa* (1594) bewails "this sinful age, that gives us beasts in shape of men." Marston in *The Scourge of Villainy* (1599) laments the "foul odious sin in which our swinish times lie wallowing."

Plays written for the entertainment of such a rabble, emanating from such minds and produced amid environment so miry and impure, would, one would naturally expect, prove but sorry and obscene things. In place, however, of blasts from Hell, they bring with them, as we have perceived, airs from Heaven.

The dramatists drew a very hard and fast line between Love and Lust. We find for instance Greene, a broken outcast who we are told by contemporaries was "an inventor of monstrous oaths, a derider of all religions, a contemner of God and man, and an arch Atheist," and who, "in theory and practice seems to have been a most perfect libertine,"<sup>1</sup> writing,

<sup>1</sup> *Biographica Dramatica*.

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Fly Lust as the deathsmán of the soul and  
defile not the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

(*Groatsworth of Wit*) 1592.

On the question of *Marriage* the views of  
the stage players are more elevated and less  
earthy than those expressed in our Book of Common  
Prayer.

Wedlock .... is a pattern of celestial peace.

SHAKESPEARE (*I Henry VI* v. 5.) 1623.

Blessed marriage, the chain that links two holy  
[loves together ....

That comes so near the sacrament itself

That priests doubt whether purer.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Thierry* iv. 1.) 1621.

If love be holy ; if that mystery of co-united  
hearts be sacrament.

MARSTON (*What you will* III. 1.) 1607.

In violating marriage law

You break a greater honour than yourself.

ANON (*Edward III.* II. 1.) 1596.

Sacred love unites the knot of Gordian at the  
shrine of Jove.

GREENE (*Orlando Furioso*) 1594.

The sacrament of marriage. Bless, Heaven,  
this sacred gordian which let violence never  
untwine.

WEBSTER (*Malfi* I. 1.) 1616-1623.

Whom God hath knit to thee tremble to lose.

PEELE (*David and Bathsheba*) 1599.

The Holy institution of Heaven ordaining  
marriage for proportioned minds.

CHAPMAN (*May Day* I. 1.) 1611.

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For love is a celestiall harmonie  
Of likely harts composed of starres concent,  
Which joyne together in sweete sympathie,  
To work each others joy and true content.

SPENSER (*Hymne in Honour of Beautie*) 1616.

The dramatists taught that man's Soul was a  
Divine Essence, not to be soaked away "in  
sensual lust and midnight bezzling."

That immortal *essence*, that translated divinity  
and colony of God—the soul.

SIR T. BROWNE (*Religio Medici*) 1635-1643.

That divine part is soaked away in sin  
In sensual lust and midnight bezzling.  
Rank inundation of luxuriousness  
Have tainted him with such gross beastliness  
That now the seat of that Celestial *Essence*  
Is all possessed with Naples pestilence.

MARSTON (*Scourge of Villainy*) 1599.

Have these *souls*? That for a good look and a  
few kind words part with their *essence*?

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Queen of Corinth*  
I. I.) 1618-1647.

The sole *essence* of my *soul*.

ANON (*Lochine* I. 3.) 1595.

The very *essence* of your *soul*.

CHAPMAN (*Widows Tears* I. I.) 1612.

The *essence* of my *soul*.

GREENE (*James IV.*) 1598.

He that should give *essence* to thy *soul*.

PEELE (*Alcazar*) 1594.

She is my *essence*.

SHAKESPEARE (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* III. I.)  
1623.

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My *essence* and my being.

HEYWOOD (*Challenge for Beauty*) 1636.

One can only express a pious hope that the youths who thundered at the playhouses and fought for bitten apples appreciated the teaching, that man embodies in his soul the spiritual equivalent of every outward object.

The ancients not improperly styled him [man] a microcosm or little world within himself.

BACON (*Wisdom of Ancients*) 1609.

To call ourselves a microcosm or little world I thought it only a pleasant trope of rhetoric till my near judgment and second thoughts told me there was a real truth therein.

SIR T. BROWNE (*Religio Medici*) 1635-1643.

I am a microcosm or little world.

*Ibid.*

I am an absolute microcosmos, a petty world of myself.

LYLY (*Endymion* IV. 2.) 1591.

The perfect analogy between the world and men.

FORD & DEKKER (*Suns Darling*) 1624-1657.

The little world of man.

*Ibid.*

This little world of man.

TOURNEUR (*Atheists Tragedy* III. 3.) 1611.

I love this kingly little world (*embracing him*)  
How sweet he looks.

GREENE (*Looking Glass*) 1594.

The king ..... strives in his little world of man to outscorn the to-and-fro conflicting wind and rain.

SHAKESPEARE (*Lear* III. I.) 1608.

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My microcosm.

SHAKESPEARE (*Coriolanus* II. I.) 1623.

I have a world within me.

MIDDLETON & ROWLEY (*Spanish Gypsy* V. III.) 1653.

This little world.

MASSINGER (*The Guardian* III. 6.) 1633-1655.

Fair Gratiana, beauty's little world!

CHAPMAN (*All Fools* III. I.) 1605.

A better essence than is the gorgeous world  
even of a man.

MARSTON (*Malcontent* I. 3.) 1604.

Look on that little world—the twofold man.

ANON (*Dr. Dodypol*) 1600.

In this little Kingdom of the Soul, it is insisted  
that man should bridle his baser affections:—

Employing the predominant affections of fear  
and hope for the suppressing and bridling  
the rest. For, as in the government of states,  
it is sometimes necessary to bridle one faction  
with another, so it is in the government  
within.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

Better conquest never can'st thou make  
Than arm thy constant and thy nobler parts  
Against these giddy, loose, suggestions.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John* III. I.) 1623.

*Bis vincit, qui se vincit in victoria.*

He conquers twice who, upon victory, overcomes  
[himself.]

BACON (*Ornamenta Rationalia*)

Shall the large limit of fair Brittainy  
By me be overthrown, and shall I not



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Master this little mansion of myself ?

ANON (*Edward III*) 1596.

He that would govern others first should be  
The master of himself.

MASSINGER (*Bondman* I. 3.) 1623-1624.

What should he do with crown and empery  
That cannot govern private, fond affections ?

KYD (*Solyman* IV. I.) 1599.

An emperor, a man that first should rule  
himself; then others.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*False One* II. 3.)

1620-1647.

In subduing Fancy's passion, conquering  
thyself, thou get'st the richest store.

GREENE (*Friar Bacon*) 1594.

Such men are neither fit to govern others  
nor able to govern themselves.

BACON (*Advice to Villiers*) 1616.

He is unfit to command others that knows  
not how to use [wrath].

MASSINGER (*Great Duke of Florence* III. I.)

1627-1636.

Outward appearances are deemed of little worth,  
unless accompanied by an inward and unseen  
beauty of the mind.

The greatest ornament is the inward beauty  
of the mind.

BACON (*Advice to Rutland*) 1595.

It is the mind that maketh good or ill,  
That maketh wretch or happy, rich or poor.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* VI. 9. 30.) 1590-1609.

Beauty is the beauty of the mind.

PEELE (*Arraignment of Paris*) 1584.

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Theres no true beauty but in the soul.

WEBSTER (*Devils Law Case* v. 6.) 1623.

I affect the unseen beauty that adorns the  
[mind.

HEYWOOD (*Brazen Age* II. 3.) 1613.

It is the mind that makes the body rich,  
And as the sun breaks through the darkest  
[clouds,

So honour peereth in the meanest habits.

SHAKESPEARE (*Taming of the Shrew* IV. 3.) 1623.

His virtue like a hidden sun  
Breaks through his baser garments.

FLETCHER (*Two Noble Kinsmen* II. 5.)  
1613 ?—1634.

Noble minds, although the coat be bare.  
Are by their semblance known how great they  
[are.

GREENE (*James* IV.) 1598.

A mind shining through any disguise .....  
needs no false light, either of riches or honour,  
to help it.

BEN JONSON (*Dedi : Cynthia's Revels*) 1600.

Money is "muck," wealth is "trash," and  
landed possessions are but "dirt."

Money is like muck, not good *except it be spread.*

BACON (*Essay : Sedition*) 1627.

Though hitherto amongst you I have lived,  
Like an unsavoury muckhill, to myself,  
Yet now my gathered treasure being spread abroad  
Shall turn to better and more fruitful uses.

BEN JONSON (*Every Man out of his Humour*  
III. 3.) 1599-1600.

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I was not born.... only to scrape  
A heap of *muck*, to fatten and manure  
The barren virtues of my progeny  
And make them sprout.

ANON (*Jack Drums Entertainment*) 1601.

Regard of worldly *muck* doth foully blend  
And how abase the high heroic spright.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* II. 7.) 1590-1609.

St. Francis never had any *money*: it is madness  
to dote on *muck*.

NASH (*Summers Last Will.*) 1600.

Amidst this hurley-burly and uproar  
King Priam sends away young Polydore  
With store of treasure and with mickle *muck*.  
[money?]

PEELE (*Tale of Troy.*) 1589.

Mortal men are muchly marred  
And moved amiss with massy *mucks* regard.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* III. 10.) 1590-1609.

Spend freely. Out on dross! 'tis *muck*.

MARSTON (*What You Will* II. 1.) 1607.

Sir Oliver *Muckhill*—a *rich* city knight.

w. s. (*The Puritan. Dramatis Personæ*) 1607.

Gentlemen whose best growth sprang from  
a dunghill, [i. e. wealth.]

WEBSTER (*White Devil* III. 1.) 1607-1612.

I am no lord o' th' time to tie my blood  
to sordid *muck*.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Four Plays in One*  
I. 2.) 1608-1647.

As for your money....I have heard that your wor-  
ship is an excellent dunghill cock to scatter all abroad.

DEKKER (*Honest Whore* II. 1.) 1604.

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She's rich.

O will you sell the joys of my full youth  
To dunghill muck ?

MIDDLETON & ROWLEY (*Spanish Gypsy* IV. 3.)  
1653.

The common muck of the world.

SHAKESPEARE (*Coriolanus* II. 2.) 1623.

I am a gentleman though I have not the muck  
of the world.

HEYWOOD (*If you know not me*) 1606.

Wenches love to marry muck first, man after.

MASSINGER (*Old Law* II. 2.) 1656.

I have quoted more of these "muck" passages than I should otherwise have thought necessary because the idea is so peculiarly unpoetic and because many of them considered by themselves would be very obscure.

### *RICHES, TRASH*

This I commend in you, and take it to be an assured token of God's mercy and favour, in respect whereof all worldly things are but *trash*.

BACON (Speech at the trial of Lord  
SANQUHAR.) 1612.

All treasure is but *trash* in respect of her person.

GREENE (*Morando*) 1587.

His study fits a mercenary drudge

Who aims at nothing but external *trash*.

MARLOWE (*Faustus* I.) 1588-1604.

Who steals my purse steals *trash*.

SHAKESPEARE (*Othello* III. 3.) 1622.

This [*purse*] is but *trash*.

MASSINGER (*Parliament of Love* II. 3.)  
1624-1660.

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Is't your purse brother Den ?  
Not mine. I seldom wear such fashionable *trash*.  
FORD (*Lady's Trial* III. 3.) 1639.

Riches are *trash*.  
GREENE (*Alcida*) 1617.

Money is *trash*.  
FORD (*Lady's Trial* II. 2.) 1639.

He weighs men's Minds and not their *trash*.  
BACON (*Essay : Goodness*) 1625.

With baggage and with *trash*.  
PEELE (*Alcazar*) 1594.

Vex for *trash* !  
SHIRLEY (*Lady of Pleasure* v. 1.) 1635-1637.

Bags of *trash*.  
BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Lady of Pleasure* IV. 2.)  
1647.

A large return for the poor *trash* I ventured  
with you.  
BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Queen of Corinth* 1.  
2.) 1618-1647.

## LAND, DIRT

Tell her, my love, more noble than the world,  
Prizes not quantity of dirty lands.  
SHAKESPEARE (*Twelfth Night* II. 4.) 1623.

Spacious in the possession of dirt.  
SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet*) 1603.

Vex a rich soul for dirt ? the quiet of whose  
every thought is worth a province ?  
SHIRLEY (*Lady of Pleasure* v. 1.) 1635-1637.

Hang dirty land and lordships !  
(*Ibid.*)

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Hang lands! It's nothing but trees, stones  
and dirt.

MIDDLETON (*Spanish Gypsy* III. 2.) 1653.

Land? 'tis dirt.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Elder Brother* III. 5.)  
1637.

Men rich in dirt.

CHAPMAN (*All Fools* I. 1.) 1605.

Lords of dirt.

MASSINGER (*Unnatural Combat* IV. 2) 1639.

Space will not permit a detailed exposition of the dramatic creed. Other phases of it will appear in further course; meanwhile, I conclude this chapter with some similitudes on the subject of Death and the Hereafter.

### THE DOORS OF DEATH

Death is so sure a doom,  
A thousand ways do guide us to our graves.  
HUGHES, BACON, and others (*Misfortunes of  
Arthur* III.) 1587.

Considering the thousand doors that lead to  
Death.

SIR T. BROWNE (*Religio Medici*). 1635-1643.

Death hath a thousand doors to let out life.

MASSINGER (*A Very Woman* v. 6.) 1634-1655.

Death hath so many doors to let out life.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Custom of the Country*  
II. 2.) 1628-1647.

Death hath ten thousand several doors.

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* IV. 2) 1616-1623.

Death at large doth walk... in thousand  
dreadful shapes.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* VI. II.) 1590-1609

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Heaven leads a thousand differing ways to one  
sure end.

FLETCHER (*Two Noble Kinsmen* I. 4.) 1613?-1634.

Death.... keeps open house

A thousand thousand ways lead to his gate.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* III. 3.) 1602.

Death rides in triumph.... and round about him  
His many thousand ways to let out souls.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Bonduca* III. 5.)

1619-1647.

A thousand ways can Acomat soon find [to die].

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

Let me die a thousand deaths.... a thousand ways.

KYD (*Cornelia* IV. I.) 1594.

I will die a hundred thousand deaths.

SHAKESPEARE (I *Henry IV.* III. 2.) 1598.

I can.... die, a thousand doors are open.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Double Marriage* II.

I.) 1619-1647.

At many doors my life runs out.

SHIRLEY (*Maids Revenge*) 1626-1639.

I have often thought upon Death and find  
it the least of all evils.

Death arrives gracious only to such as sit  
in darkness or lie heavy burdened with grief...  
Unto such Death is a redeemer and the grave  
a place for retiredness and rest.

BACON (*Essay II, Death*) 1625.

I never

Thought Death the monster that weak men  
[have fancied

As foil to make us more in love with life.

SHIRLEY (*The Traitor* IV. 2.) 1631-1635.

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It seems to me most strange that men should fear ; seeing that Death, a necessary end, will come when it will come.

SHAKESPEARE (*Julius Cæsar* II. 2.) 1623.

Let no man fear to die. We love to sleep all  
And death is but the sounder sleep. All ages  
And all hours call us ; 'tis so common easy  
That little children tread those paths before us.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Humorous Lieutenant*  
III. 6.) 1619-1641.

*Soph* : To die is to begin to live. It is to end  
An old, stale, weary work and to commence  
A newer and a better. 'Tis to leave  
Deceitful knaves for the society  
Of gods and goddesses...

*Val* : But art not grieved nor vexed to leave  
[thy life thus ?

*Soph* : Why should I grieve or vex for being sent  
To them I ever loved best ?

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Four Plays in one*  
I.) 1591-1647.

To die is all as common as to live....  
First bud we, then we blow, and after, seed :  
Then presently we fall, and as a shade  
Follows the body, so we follow death....  
I will not give a penny for a life  
Nor half a halfpenny to shun grim death,  
Since for to live is but to seek to die,  
And dying but beginning of new life.

ANON (*Edward III* IV. 4.) 1596.

Thy best of rest is sleep,  
And that thou oft provok'st ; yet grossly fear'st  
Thy death, which is no more.

SHAKESPEARE (*Measure for Measure* III. I.)  
1604-1623.



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'Tis of all sleeps the sweetest.  
Children begin it to us ; strong men seek it,  
And kings from height of all their painted glories  
Fall like spent exhalations to this centre.  
And those are fools that fear it, or imagine  
A few unhandsome pleasures or life's profits  
Can recompense this place ; and mad that stay it  
Till age blow out their lights, or rotten humours  
Bring them dispersed to the earth.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Thierry* IV. 1.) 1621.

Welcome death into whose calm port  
My sorrow beaten soul joys to arrive.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

Sickness, be thou my soul's physician  
Bring the apothecary Death with thee.

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1592-1600.

Death is our physician.

SHAKESPEARE (*Othello* I. 3.) 1622.

Death is the end of pain, no pain itself.

HUGHES, BACON, and others. (*Misfortunes of  
Arthur*) 1587.

Those [who sorrow] wait upon the shore  
of Death and *waft* unto him to draw near  
wishing above all things to see his star.

BACON (*Essay II : Death*) 1625.

Death waits to *waft* me to the Stygian banks.

FORD (*Broken Heart* III. 2.) 1633.

Come Suffolk, I must *waft* thee to thy death.

SHAKESPEARE (2 *Henry VI.* IV. 1.) 1623.

Death is a pleasure.

WEBSTER (*Wyatt*) 1607.

The dramatic ideas of the state of man *after*  
death are equally advanced and enlightened.

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Father Cardinal, I have heard you say  
That we shall see and know our friends in Heaven;  
If this be true, I shall see my boy again.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John* III. 4.) 1623.

Are the souls so, too,  
When they depart hence, lame and old and  
[loveless?

No, sure, 'tis ever youth there. Time and Death  
Follow our flesh no more; and that forced opinion  
That spirits have no sexes, I believe not.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*The Mad Lover*  
IV. I.) 1619-1647.

I have brought  
Confusion on the noblest gentleman  
That ever truly loved. But we shall meet  
Where our condemners shall not, and enjoy  
A more refined affection than here.  
No law, no father hinders marriage there  
'Twixt souls divinely affied, as sure ours were.  
*There will we multiply and generate joys  
Like fruitful parents.*

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Triumph of Love*)  
1647.

Compare the italicised lines with the following  
from Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* published  
one hundred years later.

Marriages in the heavens differ from marriages  
on earth in this, that marriages on earth are  
ordained for the procreation of children, but  
it is not so in the heavens; instead of the  
procreation of children, there is in the heavens  
the propagation of good and truth.

Dekker refers to his soul being rapt into  
"the third Heaven." Randolph knew that in

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the Spiritual World the inward qualities of each soul govern its external clothing.

To clothe the soul ! Must the soul too be clothed?  
I protest Sir, I would rather have no soul  
Than to be tormented with the clothing of it.  
(*Muses Looking Glass* IV. 2.) 1638.

The grave of Marston in the Temple Church is a plain stone slab inscribed OBLIVIONE SACRUM. It is noteworthy that the tomb of Ben Jonson is said to have been unmarked until an admirer paid a few pence to a passing mason to carve "O RARE BEN JONSON!" Marston and Ben Jonson were not alone or singular in their disdain of the pomp and circumstance of funeral rites. Their sentiments were shared by their fellow dramatists and by the philosophers Bacon and Browne.

I bequeath my soul to God above by the oblation of my Saviour. *My body to be buried obscurely.* My name to the next ages and to foreign nations.

BACON (Last Will and Testament) 1621.

When I am dead  
Save charge : let me be buried in a nook,  
No guns, no pompous whining ; these  
Are fooleries.

FORD (*Lovers Melancholy* III. 1.) 1628-1629.

Let my death and parture rest obscure  
No grave I need O Fates ! nor burial rites  
Nor stately hearse, nor tomb with haughty top  
But let my carcase lurk ; yea let my death  
Be aye unknown.

HUGHES, BACON, and others (*Misfortunes of Arthur*) 1587.

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Be content to live unknown, and die unfound.

LYLY (*Campaspe*) 1582-1584.

At my death I mean to make a total adieu  
of the world, not caring for a monument,  
history, or epitaph ; not so much as the memory  
of my name to be found anywhere but in the  
universal register of God.

SIR T. BROWNE (*Religio Medici*) 1635-1643.

What care I then though my last sleep  
Be in *the desert* or in the deep  
No lamp nor taper, day and night  
To give my charnel chargeable light  
I have there like quantity of ground  
And at the last day I shall be found.

WEBSTER (*Devils Law Case* II. 3) 1623.

'Tis all one to lie in St Innocent's church-  
yard as in *the Sands of Egypt* : ready to be  
anything in the ecstasy of being ever ; as content  
with six foot as the Moles of Adrian.

SIR T. BROWNE (*Urn Burial*) 1658.

The appearance of principles so pure, so  
elevated, and so intellectual, amid surroundings  
so unutterably evil, is as astonishing as a  
find of jewels on a mudheap. Writing of  
the awful state of Theology at Cambridge and  
contrasting with it more recent views, Mul-  
linger observes that, " this serene philosophy,  
like the light gleaming from some remote snow  
clad peak, reached only at rare intervals the  
dwellers in the misty valleys below. The Cambridge  
student, if he yearned for certainty, for sympathy  
and for definite belief, found it for the most  
part in docile assent to some one or other of  
the warring creeds of his day and in fierce

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denunciation of all who subscribed to another Shibboleth than that to which he had yielded up his own spiritual independence. And if here and there there was to be found some isolated thinker to whom the prostration of the intellect seemed but a perilous expedient whereby to purchase the longed for mental assurance ; who reasoned, doubted, and enquired, and, though ever baffled, still returned to his Sisyphean toil — *if such a one there were*—, we cannot but think that as regarded intellectual satisfaction and enlightenment, his position was little better than, was in some respects less enviable than that of his antetype of a century before.”<sup>1</sup>

As we have seen, the dramatists display a complete unity of Religion and like one man were pushing at the stone of Sisyphus.

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of Cambridge University.* Vol. 2, p. 439.

## CHAPTER VI

### EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

The moral influence of Shakespeare, while universally conceded, is usually assumed to have been the unconscious outpouring of a noble mind; the magic and involuntary working of a wayward genius. Richard Grant White goes so far as to say, "That Shakspeare did his work with *no other purpose whatever*, moral, philosophic, artistic, literary, than to make an attractive play, which would bring him money, should be constantly borne in mind... He wrote what he wrote merely to fill the theatre and his own pockets. There was as much deliberate purpose in his breathing." <sup>1</sup> Of the minor Elizabethan Dramatists there exists a similar but stronger misconception, that they wrote merely as a means of livelihood, and without any thought of Posterity. That the Drama was a fortuitous and mercenary outburst, is however, a view quite manifestly wrong. On every hand are indications that the dramatists were pursuing a definite and very serious design—that of purging the World of folly, ignorance, and sin.

In the introduction to *Lantern and Candle Light* (1608) Dekker avows his intention of levying

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeare Studies* pp. 20, 209.

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war upon "certain wild and barbarous rebels that were up in open arms against the tranquillity of the weal public," and styling himself "The Bellman of London" he appeals to his readers to aid him in his unequal contest.

"Howsoever it be struck, or whosoever gives the first blow, the victory depends upon the valour of you that are the wings to the Bellmans army; for which conquest he is in hope you will valiantly fight, sithence the quarrel is against the head of monstrous abuses, and the blows which you must give are in defence of Law, Justice, Order, Ceremony, Religion, Peace, and that honourable title of Goodness. Saint George! I see the two armies move forward; and behold The Bellman himself<sup>1</sup> first chargeth upon the face of the enemy."

In their struggle against the abuses of the age the dramatists turned to the stage as the readiest and most effective weapon for their purpose. This is definitely stated in *The Muses Looking Glass* by Thomas Randolph —another rising genius who "indulged himself too much," and was "too early cut off; dying in 1634 in the 29th year of his age."

"Apollo," says Randolph, "finding every place:—

Fruitful in nothing but fantastic follies  
And most ridiculous humours, as he is

<sup>1</sup> It was a fixed idea in the mind of Bacon that he likewise was a Bellman, see Letter to Salisbury, (1605-6) "I shall content myself to awake better spirits, like a Bellringer; which is first up to call others to Church," and Letter to Dr Playter (1606-7) "Since I have taken upon me to ring a bell to call other wits together, which is the meanest office, it cannot but be consonant with my desire to have that bell heard as far as may be."

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The God of Physic thought it appertained  
To him to find a cure to purge the Earth  
Of Ignorance and Sin, two grand diseases  
And now grown epidemical. Many receipts  
He thought upon, as to have planted hellebore  
In every garden ; but none pleas'd like this.  
He takes out water from the Muses spring  
And sends it to the North, there to be freez'd  
Into a crystal ; that being done, he makes  
A mirror with it and instils this virtue  
That it should by reflection shew each man  
All his deformities both of soul and body  
And cure 'em both.

(v. 111) 1638

The magic Mirror which was to accomplish this universal reformation of the whole wide world was *the Stage*. In the introduction to *Every Man out of his Humour* Ben Jonson writes :—

*Asper.* Who is so patient of this impious world  
That he can check his spirit or rein his tongue ?  
Or who hath such a dead unfeeling sense  
That Heavens horrid thunders cannot wake  
To see the Earth cracked with the weight of sin,  
Hell gaping under us, and o'er our heads  
Black ravenous ruin, with her sail stretched wings  
Ready to sink us down and cover us ?  
Who can behold such prodigies as these  
And have his lips sealed up ? Not I ; my soul  
Was never ground into such oily colours  
To flatter vice and daub iniquity :  
But with an armèd and resolvèd hand  
I'll strip the ragged follies of the time  
Naked as at their birth—

*Cordatus.* Be not too bold.



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*Asper.* You trouble me—and with a whip of steel  
Print wounding lashes in their iron ribs.  
I fear no mood stamp'd in a private brow  
When I am pleased t'unmask a publick vice  
I fear no strumpet's drugs, or ruffians stab  
Should I detect their hateful luxuries;  
No broker's, usurers, or lawyer's gripe  
Were I disposed to say they are all corrupt.  
Tut, these are so innate and popular  
That drunken custom would not shame to laugh  
In scorn, at him that should but dare to tax 'em

. . . . .  
Well, I will scourge those apes  
And to these courteous eyes oppose a mirror  
As large as is the stage whereon we act  
Where they shall see the times deformity.

*Mitis.* *Asper* (I urge it as your friend) take heed.  
The days are dangerous, full of exception  
And men are grown impatient of reproof.

*Asper.* Do not I know the times condition?  
Yes, *Mitis*, and their souls; and who they be  
That either can, or will, except against me;  
None but a sort of fools, so sick in taste  
That they contemn all physic of the mind  
And like gall'd camels kick at every touch.

1599-1600 /

It is thus apparent that Ben Jonson was animated by precisely the same purpose as were Dekker and Randolph, and that similarly he turned to the stage as an instrument of correction. Greene, working in collaboration with Lodge, displays the same idea by entitling one of his plays *A Looking Glass for London and England*. "The purpose of playing," says Shakespeare, "is to hold

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as 't were the mirror up to Nature ; to shew Virtue her own features, Scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure." "Give me leave" he asks in *As you like it*, "and I will through and through cleanse the foul body of the infected world, if they will patiently receive my medicine."

Throughout the entire Drama we find this reiteration of a profound purpose. "In serious jest and jesting seriousness," says Marston, "I strive to scourge polluting beastliness." It is no exaggeration to assert that there is scarcely a human vice or foible that escapes the curl of the players' lash, and not a few of the sixpenny play books are palpably sermons in a dramatic guise. The Duelling evil has already been mentioned ; in addition a few other typical examples may be cited.

The dramatist's hatred of the use of cosmetics is strikingly evident.

Shall we protest to the ladies that this painting makes them angels ?... No Sir, such vices as stand not accountable to law should be cured as men heal tetter, by casting ink upon them.

MARSTON (*The Malcontent*) 1604.

There's knavery in daubing.

DEKKER (*The Honest Whore* II. 1.) 1604.

She that would be mother of fools, let her compound with me. [paint]

MIDDLETON (*Women beware Women* III. 2.) 1657.

Your scurvy face physic.

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* II. 2.) 1616-1623.

False painting.

SHAKESPEARE (Sonnet 67.) 1609.

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Odious painting.

WEBSTER (*Devils Law Case* III. 3.) 1623.

Well worthy of the deficiencies which it hath, being neither fine enough to deceive, nor handsome enough to please, nor wholesome enough to use.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

I hate thee worse than I loathe painting.

DAY (*Humour out of Breath* III. 1.) 1608.

Does every proud and self-affecting dame camphire her face for this, and grieve her Maker?

*Ibid* III. 4.

Thou most ill shrouded rottenness, thou piece Made by a painter and apothecary!

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster* II. 4.)

1613-1620.

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another. .... Go to, I' ll no more on 't.

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet* III. 1.) 1603.

Massinger's feelings towards an advocate of the "aids of art" are so fiery that they nearly lead to manslaughter.

The aids of art, my gracious lord, but in  
The autumn of her age .... may be useful,

Slave! witch! imposter (Strikes him down)

Mountebank! cheater! traitor to great nature,

In thy presumption to repair what she,

In her immutable decree, design'd

For some few years to grow up, and then wither!

(*Bashful Lover* v. 1.) 1636-1655.

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Remembering how freely both by *men* and women "face culture" was then practised, such allusions seem—from the commercial aspect—singularly ill judged. One marvels that Tradition has not had to record the slitting of the dramatic Nose at the instigation of some angered virago.

Almost as aggressive and peremptory are the players in their denunciation of drunkenness, a custom then universal. As a potent drinker the Englishman of this period, and for long afterwards, enjoyed among European nations a peerless and unenviable reputation. "Your Dane, your German and your swag bellied Hollander—drink ho!— are nothing to your English"<sup>1</sup> says Shakespeare. The upper classes were in this respect almost as brutal as the lower.

Historians tell us that the Court of James I discarded the veil of chivalry and courtesy that shrouded the grossness of the preceding reign; but except for that picturesque but illusive mist, with which Time beautifies all far distance, it is difficult to perceive that any pretence of a veil ever existed. Queen Elizabeth and her Maids of Honour drank beer for breakfast. The Queen, notwithstanding her culture and capacity as a ruler, set a disastrous example so far as regards manners. She spat at a courtier whose coat offended her taste. She stamped and thrust about her with a sword, behaving at times, as the French said, like a lioness. She rapped out tremendous oaths and tickled the back of Leicester's neck when he knelt to receive his Earldom. The invention of new and appalling oaths became a

<sup>1</sup> *Othello* II. 3. 1622.

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duty of the courtier ; and the man who would not, or could not, swear became accounted " a peasant, a clown, a patch, an effeminate person. " " He," says Stubbes, " that can lash out the bloodiest oaths is counted the bravest fellow. For (say they) it is a sign of a courageous heart, of a valiant stomach and of a generoseous, heroical, and puissant mind. " <sup>1</sup>

A courtly observer *tempus* James I, observes " Our good English nobles now follow the fashion and wallow in beastly delights. The ladies abandon their sobriety and are seen to roll about in intoxication. " <sup>2</sup>

Tea and coffee were as yet not introduced into England ; beer was the staple and universal beverage. " Few people," said an Italian, " keep wine in their houses, but buy it for the most part at a tavern ; and when they mean to drink a great deal they go to the tavern, and this is done not only by the men but by ladies of distinction. " <sup>3</sup>

Shakespeare is recorded to have died from the consequences of a debauch with Drayton and Ben Jonson. A surfeit of Rhenish and pickled herring prematurely carried off the egregious Robert Greene. Ben Jonson has indited an ode to the glories of beer, commencing :—

When shall we meet again and have a taste  
Of that transcendant ale we drank of last.

and continuing :—

<sup>1</sup> *Anatomy of Abuses.* Furnival p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Harrington see *A History of Hampton Court.* Law, p. 183..

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Goadby's *England of Shakespeare.* p. 73.

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My Mouth did stand awry, just as it were  
Labouring to whisper somewhat in mine Eare.  
My pock-hold Face, they say, appeared to some  
Just like a dry and burning hony combe.  
My Tongue did swim in Ale, and joyde to boast  
Himself a better seaman than the toste.  
Each Brewer that I mett, I kist, and made  
Suitor to bee Apprentice to the Trade :  
One did approve the motion, when he saw  
That mine owne Leggs would the Indenturs draw.  
Well sir, I grew starke madde: that you may see  
By this adventure upon Poetrie.  
You easily may gesse I am not quite  
Growne sober yett by these poore lines I wright.  
I only doot for this, that you may see  
How though you payde for th' ale yet it payde  
[mee. <sup>1</sup>

Of all the Elizabethan dramatists Ben Jonson was probably the most stoical and austere. He presided over the galaxy of wits who frequented the Mermaid Tavern. Yet, though begotten and bred in the atmosphere of the pothouse the drama owes little to the fumes of beer. Speaking generally there is no joying in transcendant ale, no epicurean tenderness towards the grape. Wine is regarded not as a good familiar creature but as a materialised devil.

O thou invisible spirit of Wine ! If thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee Devil.

SHAKESPEARE (*Othello* II. 3.) 1622.

Wine, a devil, Sir !

MASSINGER (*A Very Woman* III. 2.). 1634-1655.

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *The Athenæum* Oct. 1st, 1904.

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O God! that men should put an enemy  
in their mouths to steal away their brains!  
that we should with joy, pleasance, revel and  
applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

SHAKESPEARE (*Othello* II. 3.) 1622.

Depise drunkenness which wasteth the wit,  
and maketh men all equal unto beasts.

GREENE (*Groatsworth of Wit*) 1592.

Hate that sin of swine and not of men....  
The loathsomeness of drunkenness.

RANDOLPH (*Muses Looking Glass IV.*) 1638.

What a beastly thing it is to bottle up ale  
[in a man's belly.

No more of this, I hate it to the death  
No such defomer of the soul and sense  
As is this swinish, damn'd-born drunkenness.

This final passage is from *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1600) the delightful work of the untoward Nash (— "a verie Nash.") It is a typical example of the "frightless resolution" with which the amusement-mongers "ripped up and lanced the time's impieties."

But, in addition to "lashing the lewdness of Brittainia," the dramatists set themselves to the more Sisyphean task of *educating* the doltish and unlettered multitude. "We actors," says Mas-singer :—

"With delight join profit, and endeavour  
To build their minds up fair, and on the stage  
Decipher to the life what honours wait  
On good and glorious actions, and the shame  
That treads upon the heels of vice.

(*Roman Actor* I. 1) 1626-1629.

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“There has been more by us in some one play laughed into wit and virtue,” says the author of *The Muses Looking Glass* “than hath been by twenty tedious lectures,” a sentiment endorsed by Massinger, who claims that :—

Actors may put in for as large a share  
As all the sects of the philosophers.  
They with cold precepts, perhaps seldom read  
Deliver what an honourable thing  
The active virtue is. But does that fire  
The blood, or swell the veins with emulation  
To be both good and great, equal to that  
Which is presented on our theatres ?

(*Roman Actor* 1. 3) 1626-1629

The author of *The Muses Looking Glass* pityingly repudiates the charges that were so frequently levelled against the Drama.

O dull Ignorance  
How ill 'tis understood what we do mean  
For good and honest ! They abuse our scene  
And say we live by vice. Indeed 'tis true  
As the physicians by diseases do  
Only to cure them.  
That I soothe Vice ! I do but flatter them  
As we give children plums to learn their prayers  
To entice them to the truth and by fair means  
Work out their reformation.

Most of the quotations in this volume evince an educational purpose ; but more specific instances are apparent in the series of Chronicle plays of which a comprehensive group appeared at about this period.

“The study of History,” says Mullinger, “so far as it derived any impulse from the



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two Universities was pursued with but little intelligence, and we look in vain as yet for any adequate conception of the qualifications demanded for its adequate exposition. 'Histories,' wrote Bacon in 1597, 'make men wise' but nothing that could be called History in this sense had as yet appeared at either of the English Universities."<sup>1</sup>

It is a curious fact that just this lacking Science had, however, already appeared and was even then flourishing amid those illfamed "schools of mischief" the London playhouses: a form of History, not perhaps academically accurate, but adequate for unlettered hearers and eminently destined to make men wiser and more patriotic. The note sounded by Shakespeare yet rings in phrase and quotation, and the majority of Englishmen are still content to accept him as their chronicler. Whether by accident or design the gaps in Shakespeare's historic series were largely filled by his fellow dramatists. As Mr Parker Woodward points out, the times of Brutus and Lochrine were exhibited in *Lochrine* (anon.<sup>2</sup> 1595), of Leir in *King Lear* (anon. 1605, Shakespeare 1608), of Archigallus and Elidurus in *Archigallus* (anon. 1606), of Cassibelane in *True Trojans* (anon. 1603-1633), of Kimbeline in *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare 1623), of Boadicea in *Bonduca* (Beaumont and Fletcher 1619-1647), of Vortigern, Hengist and Horsa in *Mayor of Quinborough* (Middleton 1597-1661), of Uter Pendragon in *Birth of Merlin* (anon. 1597-1662), and of Arthur in *Misfortunes of Arthur* (Hughes, Bacon and others 1587).

Then comes a notable break, and the chronicle

<sup>1</sup> *History of Cambridge* vol. 2, pp. 420-433.

<sup>2</sup> [See footnote on p. 114.]

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Plays pass to the period of the Norman Conquest.

*Hardicanute* was acted at the Rose Theatre in 1597. William I appears in *Faire Emm* (anon. 1631), Henry I in *Famous Wars* (anon. 1598); *Stephen* is the title of a lost play. Then we have Richard I in *Downfall of Huntingdon* (anon. 1601), John in *King John* (anon. 1591, Shakespeare 1623), Henry III in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (Greene 1594).

After these follows a sequence of plays of *Edward I* (Peele 1593), *Edward II* (Marlowe 1593-1598), *Edward III* (anon. 1596), *Richard II* (anon. 1597, Shakespeare 1598), *Henry IV* (Shakespeare 1598), *Henry V* (anon. 1598,<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare 1600), *Henry VI* (Shakespeare 1623), *Edward IV* (Heywood 1600), *Richard III* (anon. 1594, Shakespeare 1597), Henry VII in *Perkin Warbeck* (Ford 1634), *Henry VIII* (Shakespeare 1623), of Edward VI and Mary in *Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Dekker and Webster 1607), and finally the times of Elizabeth in *The troubles of Queen Elizabeth* (Heywood 1605).

Apart from this comprehensive English Chronicle Shakespeare and his fellows exhibited a wide range of Roman history, and revealed to their ignorant fellow countrymen flashes of contemporary life in foreign lands. English insularism

<sup>1</sup> With regard to this frequent "anon" Mr Woodward points out that all plays printed from 1584 until 1594 were anonymously published. No play was titled after either Marlowe, Greene, Kyd, or Peele until after his death. *Old Wives Tale* 1595 with the initials "G. P." may be an exception, but as the year did not expire until March 25th and Peele was last heard of on the previous January 17th as seriously ill and destitute, he may have been dead at the date of publication.

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seems at this period to have been rampant, but the dramatists never pandered to the prevailing prejudice. Of Londoners in his time the Duke of Wurtemberg records, "They scoff and laugh at foreigners, and moreover one dares not oppose them, else the street boys and apprentices collect together in immense crowds, and strike to the right and left unmercifully without regard to person." Isaac Casaubon in the reign of James the First complained that he had never been so badly treated as by the people of London; they threw stones at his window; they pelted his children and himself with stones. The Venetian Ambassador of 1497 testified to the same effect; in 1557 his successor said it was impossible to live in London on account of the insolence with which foreigners were treated.<sup>1</sup>

The better mannered and more tolerant playwrights were linguists, and extensive travellers. They constantly introduced Italian, French and Spanish quotations; Latin was so homely and familiar to them that it dropped almost unconsciously from their lips. Their knowledge of aristocratic life in Italy, France and Spain was equal to, if not more extensive than, that exhibited by Shakespeare. A point, trifling in itself but noteworthy as manifesting their intimate familiarity with detail unknown to their betters occurs in their treatment of Spanish consonants. "The Spaniards," says Bacon in *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, dislike thin letters and change them immediately into those of a middle tone." In accordance with this knowledge he alters the

<sup>1</sup> *London in the Time of the Tudors* Besant p. 203.

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common English spelling of *Madrid* and writes *MadriII*.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Middleton,<sup>2</sup> Beaumont and Fletcher,<sup>3</sup> and Dekker,<sup>4</sup> speak of *MadriII*; Middleton even changing *Validolid* into *Validoly*.

The hard *d* of "Bermudas" is carefully altered into "*th*," Shakespeare writing *Bermoothes*;<sup>5</sup> Field, *Barmuthoes*;<sup>6</sup> Webster, *Bermoothes*<sup>7</sup> and *Barmotho*,<sup>8</sup> and Beaumont and Fletcher, *Bermoothees*.<sup>9</sup>

In no case does the erratic spelling countenance the thin letter *d*, though at that time, as today, the common and familiar form was *Bermudas*. Even Sir Walter Raleigh, who had visited the locality, refers in his *Discovery of Guiana* to "the *Bermudas* a hellish sea etc.,"<sup>10</sup> and Silvester Jourdan's tract published in 1610 is entitled "*A Discovery of the Bermudas otherwise called the Ile of Drivels*."

With his customary insight Emerson observes, "There never was a writer who, seeming to draw every hint from outward history, the life of cities and courts, owed them so little. You shall never find in this world the barons or kings he depicted. 'Tis fine for

1 *Observation on a Libel* 1592. Spedding, *Life and Works* v. 1, p. 194.

2 *Spanish Gypsy*. 1653.

3 *Fair Maid of Inn* iv. 2. 1626-1647.

4 *Match me in London* I. 1631.

5 *Tempest* I. 2. 1623.

6 *Amends for Ladies* III. 4. 1618.

7 *Malfi* III. 2. 1616-1623.

8 *Devils Laws Case* III. 2. 1623.

9 *Women Pleased* I, 2. 1647.

10 *Hakluyt Society* 3. p. 114.

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Englishmen to say they only know history by Shakespeare. The palaces they compass earth and sea to enter, the magnificence and personages of royal and imperial abodes, are shabby imitations and caricatures of his—clumsy pupils of his instruction. There are no Warwicks, no Talbots, no Bolingbrokes, no Cardinals, no Henry V's., in real Europe, like his. The loyalty and royalty he drew was all his own. The real Elisabeths, Jameses, and Louises were painted sticks before this magician. ”

How true this is! and how equally true it is of the lesser Elizabethan writers! If ever there were cultured and fine minded gentlemen in those days they were to be sought among the *canaille*. Only those who have looked below the garish and misleading surface of History can appreciate the frowsiness of reality in comparison with the conceptions of the outcast Elizabethan playwrights. There is scarcely a branch of morality, or learning, in which they do not exhibit an innate aristocracy of mind. In the fragment entitled *Filum Labyrinthi* it was deplored by Bacon that “ the ignominy of vanity had abated all greatness of mind.” At a later period of his life he pronounced the virtue to be almost extinct.<sup>1</sup> This is a perplexing assertion in view of the fact that even the ‘skipping swaggerers’ of the playhouses were not only displaying an exalted magnanimity in the slums but were blazing the

<sup>1</sup> “ I know his virtues and that namely that he hath much greatness of mind *which is a thing almost lost among men.* ”

BACON (Letter to Tobie Mathew 1620.)

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fact broadcast. In the year 1594 at least four, if not five, possessors of kingly minds were *simultaneously* in evidence.

I am .... kingly in my thoughts.

SHAKESPEARE (2 *Henry VI* v. 1.) 1594.

Selim, thy mind in kingly thoughts attire.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

We commend thy princely mind.

GREENE (*Orlando*) 1594.

This princely mind in thee, argues the height and honor of thy birth.

PEELE (*Alcazar*) 1594.

This kindness to thy king, argues thy noble mind and disposition.

MARLOWE (*Edward II*) 1593-1598.

Moral and mental attributes are not perceptible except to those who themselves possess them. Though Greene and his compeers were "notable braggarts" and vainglorious vagabonds, the printed works of these writers are so pervaded with dignity, sweetness, and nobility, that they disallow any suggestion of megalomania.

We have already quoted their kingly conception that the ambition of a monarch should be to bridle his own base tendencies. So far from forming their ideals upon the infamous surroundings of Elizabeth and James they rarely refer to a court without associating the word *academy*—or the more curious Greek word *Academe* coined, and first employed, by Shakespeare.

Our court shall be a little *academe*.

SHAKESPEARE (*Love's Labour's Lost* I. 1.)

1598.

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Hath made the *court* a kind of *academy*  
(*query academe?*)

MASSINGER (*Emperor of the East* I. I.) 1630-1632.

Men came to his *court* as to bright *academies*.

WEBSTER (*A Monumental Column*) 1613.

Your own *court* .... as you call it, your *academy*.

FORD (*The Fancies* III. I.) 1638.

The good old *queen* .... whose *house*....  
was an *academe*.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Thierry* I. 2.) 1621.

The *academy* from whence I sent him to  
the Emperors *court*.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Custom of the Country*  
II. I.) 1628-1647.

The *court*.... the abstract of all *academies*.

IBID (*Elder Brother* v. I.) 1637.

The dramatic conception of a Prince is that em-  
bodied in *Hamlet*, sad, serious, and full of thought.

He was a *prince*, *sad*, *serious*, and *full of thoughts*.

BACON (*Henry VII.*) 1621.

How is the *king* employed?

I left him private, *full of sad thoughts*.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry VIII.* II. 2.) 1623.

Yonder he walks *full of sad thoughts*.

MASSINGER (*Duke of Milan* I. 3.) 1623.

Alas good *prince* .... so *full of serious thoughts*  
and counsels? .... A *sad* and serious truth.

CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* v. 2. and  
II. I.) 1654.

You could not seem thus *serious* if you  
were married, thus *sad* and *full of thoughts*.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*The Pilgrim* I. I.)  
1621-1647.

## EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

The real king is he whose brow is crowned  
with a contented mind.

My crown is in my heart, not on my head  
Nor to be seen. My crown is called content.

SHAKESPEARE (III. *Henry VI.*) 1623.

Content's a kingdom, and I wear that crown.

HEYWOOD (*Woman Killed with Kindness*)

1602-1107.

A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

GREENE (*Farewell to Folly*) 1617.

Whose brow is wreathed with the silver crown  
Of clear content, this, Lucio, is a king.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* IV. 4.) 1602.

I had a kingdom once but am deposed  
From all that royalty of blest content.

FORD (*Lady's Trial* II. 3.) 1639.

Is this your palace?

Yes, and our kingdom, for 'tis our content.

DEKKER (*Honest Whore* IV. 1.) 1604.

He only lives most happy  
That free and far from majesty  
Can live content.

KYD (*Cornelia* IV. 2.) 1594.

The sweet content that country life affords  
Passeth the royal pleasures of a king.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

Crown your beauty with content.

FIELD (*Amends for Ladies* I. 1.) 1618.

Crown you with full content.

FORD (*The Fancies* v. 3.) 1638.

The best life is to be contented.

BACON (*Promus MS.*) 1594 published 1883.



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Our content is our best having.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry VIII.* II. 3.) 1623.

It is noteworthy that however low may have been the players' careers their tastes were never otherwise than courtly. Their works contain few if any allusions to rough popular sports—cockfighting, bearbaiting, football, keelpins, trunks, quoits, pitchingbars, hurling, leaping, running, mustering, wasters, quintain, boxing or wrestling— but are crowded with technicalities proving a close familiarity with Venerie, Falconry, Chess, Bowls and Primero. The metaphors drawn from these subjects are numerous. "Fly it a pitch above the soar of praise," says the anonymous author of *Edward III.*<sup>1</sup> "How high a pitch his resolution soars," says Shakespeare<sup>2</sup> and the same Hawking metaphor is frequent elsewhere.

In *The False one*<sup>3</sup> Beaumont and Fletcher observe,  
The greatness of thy mind does soar a pitch  
Their dim eyes, darkened by their narrow souls,  
Cannot arrive at.

Yet, notwithstanding the majesty of intellect everywhere apparent, the dramatists unanimously denounce Ambition. By so doing they were espousing an unpopular idea, for Stubbes in his *Anatomy* observes that, "from the highest to the lowest, from the priest to the popular sort, even all in general (are) wonderfully inclined to covetousness and ambition."

It will be observed that the dramatists and

1 (II. 1.) 1596.

2 (*Richard II.* I. 1) 1597

3 (v. 4. 1620-47).

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Bacon are alike in refusing to perceive any virtue whatever in ambition.

Ambition is like choler which is an humour. If it be stopped it becometh ... malign and *venomous* ... No man will take that part except he be like a *seelèd*<sup>1</sup> *dove*, which mounts and mounts because he cannot see about him.

BACON (*Essay: Ambition*) 1607-1625.

Ambition, 'tis of *vipers* breed, it gnaws a passage through the womb that gave it motion. Ambition like a *seelèd dove* mounts upward higher and higher still to perch on clouds, but tumbles headlong down with heavier ruin.

FORD (*Broken Heart* II. 2.) 1633.

This insatiate spirit of aspiring being so dangerous and fatal, desire mounted on the wings of it, descends not but headlong.

CHAPMAN (*Widow's Tears* III. 1.) 1612.

He should make it the height of his ambition ... to add strength to her wings and mount her higher though he fall himself into the bottomless abyss.

MASSINGER (*Bashful Lover* v. III.) 1636-1655.

For greater *vipers* never may be found  
Within a state than such aspiring heads.

GREENE (*James IV.*) 1598.

Take heed! Ambition is a sugared ill.

IBID (*Penelope's Web*) 1601.

Fell ambition.

ANON. (*Lochrine* IV. 3.) 1595.

Foul ambition.

SHAKESPEARE (2 *Henry VI.* III. 1.) 1623.

1 *Seelèd* = hooded and blindfolded --- an expression of Falconry.

## EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

Fell ambition, founded first in blood.

KYD (*Cornelia* III.) 1594.

Fell ambition.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

O hateful, hellish *snake* of Tartary,  
That feedest on the souls of noblest men  
Damned ambition, cause of all misery  
Why dost thou creep from forth thy loathsome

[fen.

IBID (*Ibid*)

She held a great gold chain linked well  
Whose upper end to highest Heaven was knit,  
And lower end did reach to lowest Hell...

That was ambition.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* II. 7) 1590-1609

Oh Ambition

The grandam of all sin, that strikes at stars  
With an undaunted brow, whilst thus thy feet  
Slide to the nether Hell.

FALKLAND (*Marriage Night* v. 1.) 1664.

Ambition hath one heel nailed in Hell, though  
she stretch her fingers to touch the Heavens.

LYLY (*Midas* II. 1.) 1592.

The desire of power in excess caused the  
angels to fall.

BACON (*Essay: Goodness*). 1625.

Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away Ambition.  
By that sin fell the angels.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry VIII*) 1623.

Banish the canker of ambitious thoughts.

IBID (*Henry VI. I. 2.*) I 1623.

Ambition, Madam, is a great man's madness....  
lunatic beyond all cure.

WEBSTER (*Malfi* I. I) 1616-1623.

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Madness of ambition.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck*) 1634.

The huge drought of sole, self-loving, vast ambition.

MARSTON (*Sophonisba* II. 2.) 1606.

The lesson which the dramatists endeavoured to inculcate is that embodied in the motto of Bacon's crest *MEDIOCRIA FIRMA*— Safety is in the mean.

It is no mean happiness therefore to be seated in the mean.

SHAKESPEARE (*Merchant of Venice* I. 2.) 1600.

Take heed my sons, the mean is sweetest melody.

LODGE (*Rosalynde*) 1590.

*Golden mean!* Her sisters two extremities

. . . . Measure out a mean

Neither to melt in pleasures hot desire

Nor cry in heartless grief...

Thrice happy man who fares them both atween.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* II. I. 58) 1590-1609.

Pleasure's more extreme than grief. There's nothing sweet to man but mean.

MARSTON (*Dutch Courtesan* v. I.) 1605.

Shun th'extremes.... keep the *golden mean*.

HEYWOOD (*London's Fus. Honorarium*) 1631.

Keep a mean then.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Spanish Curate*  
v. 5.) 1622-1647.

The *golden mean*.

BACON (Advice to VILLIERS) 1616-1661.

Keep the mean.

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1600.

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*Mediocria firma.*

MARSTON (*Satyres*) 1598.

*Mediocria firma.* [Bacon's crest].

*Golden mediocrity.*

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

Keep a mean.... *Golden mediocrity.*

RANDOLPH (*Muses Looking Glass* I. IV  
and v. I.) 1638.

This matter of pomp which is Heaven to  
some men is Hell to me

BACON (Letter to BUCKINGHAM) 1617.

Greatness, with private men  
Esteem'd a blessing, is to me a curse  
And we, whom for their births they conclude  
The only freemen, are the only slaves.  
Happy the *golden mean* ! Had I been born  
In a poor sordid cottage ; not nursed up  
With expectation to command a Court  
I might, like such of your condition, sweetest,  
Have ta'en a safe and middle course.

MASSINGER (*Great Duke of Florence* I. I.)  
1627-1636.

Were I baser born, my mean estate  
Could warrant me from this impendent harm  
But to be great and happy ; these are twain.

GREENE (*James IV.*) 1598.

I never loved ambitiously to climb..  
I love to dwell betwixt the hills and dales  
Neither so great as to be envied  
Nor yet so poor the world should pity me  
*Inter utrumque tene medio tutissimus ibis.*

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1600.

I ever bare in mind (*in some middle place*

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that I could discharge) to serve her Majesty.

BACON (Letter to BURLEIGH) 1592.

The scourge of greatness !

SHAKESPEARE (I *Henry IV.* I. 3.) 1598.

I must leave it to others to reconcile this aristocracy of feeling with the base reputation of the actors' lives. Florio, the translator of Montaigne, observes, " You shall now see them on the stage play a king, an emperor, or a duke ; but they are no sooner off the stage but they are base rascals, vagabond abjects, and porterly hirelings, which is their natural and original condition. "

## CHAPTER VII.

### MEDICINE AND PHYSIOLOGY.

“ The earlier dramatists, ” says the historian J. R. Green, “ were for the most part poor and reckless in their poverty ; wild livers, defiant of law or common fame, in revolt against the usages and religion of their day, ‘atheists’ in general repute, holding Moses for a juggler, haunting the brothel and the alehouse and dying starved or in tavern brawls. ”

From internal evidence it is obvious that these phenomenal men must have wandered systematically from the alehouses to the Hall of the Barber-surgeons where alone could they have acquired the medical knowledge which they unquestionably possessed. “ It is a curious fact ” says *The British Medical Journal* “ that great writers speaking generally have been no lovers of the Medical profession, ” but to this rule the Elizabethan dramatists were conspicuous exceptions.

Shirley, Ford, and Beaumont and Fletcher, jest negligently about the *pericranium* ; Spenser, Shakespeare, and Porter, allude to the *brainpan* ; Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, to the *pia mater* ; Massinger to the *cerebrum* and the *cutis*. Middleton writes familiarly of *cbilis*, *spinal medul*, *emunctories* *ginglymus*, and so forth.

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“How shall I do to satisfy colon?,” asks Massinger in *The Unnatural Combat* (I. I.). “What trick have you to satisfy colon?” enquires Heywood in *Maid of the West* (II. 4.). Middleton in *The Chaste Maid of Cheapside* (II. 2.) considers that “the *colon* of a gentleman should be fulfilled with answerable food,” and Webster in *Sir Thomas Wyatt* exclaims, “O *colon* cries out most tyrannically, the little gut hath no mercy.”

That “the schoolmasters of idleness and bawd-erie” should have been adepts in physiology is little less marvellous than that four of them should simultaneously have seized upon the colon—an obscure portion of the intestines—as a jape within the reach of the unlettered and egregious crowd. According to Dr Murray, until Massinger revived it in 1622, the word “colon” had not been used in England since 1541. Its meaning would not improbably puzzle nine tenths of an educated audience at the present day.

Whatsoever may have been their method of acquirement it is certain that the dramatists display an acquaintance with medicine so unusual and extensive that it must have been level with, if not in advance of, the highest knowledge of their time.

The science of Therapeutics was very much on a par with the dismal level of Learning and Religion. Even the elements of true Medicine cannot be said to have been in existence until 1628, the date of the publication of Harvey’s epoch-marking discovery of the circulation of the blood. So benighted was the state of the profession that a mere statement of the facts lays one open to the suspicion of exaggeration.



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By Parliamentary License the Company of the Barber-surgeons possessed a monopoly of teaching physiology, with the privilege of dissecting human bodies—limited to those of four criminals annually. This right was so rigorously enforced that as late as 1714 a surgeon who had ventured to practise dissection on his own account was prosecuted and compelled to desist.

It was the *metier* of the Barber-surgeons to *let blood*; a function they fulfilled with such energy that it brought down upon them a Parliamentary Injunction to stop the pollution of the roadways.

A grade higher than the Barber-surgeon stood the Apothecary. A picture of his needy shop garnished with its beggarly account of empty boxes is given in *Romeo and Juliet*. The proprietor is depicted as a starveling in tattered weeds and overwhelming brows.

Around these two main classes stretched a chaotic wilderness of chirurgeons, alchemists, herbalists, conjurors and charlatans, redeemed at rare intervals by an isolated genius like Harvey. Men of science were, oftener than not, alchemists; apothecaries were extensive dealers in charms and philtres; poisoning was better understood than healing. "Their ignorance" says Burton "doth more harm than rashness; their Art is wholly conjectural if it be an Art, uncertain, imperfect and got by killing of men: they are a kind of butchers, leeches, men slayers; chirurgeons and apothecaries especially, that are indeed the Physicians hangmen, *carnifices* and common Executioners; though to say truth, Physicians themselves come not far behind."

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The Chronicler of Abbot Jocelin de Brakelond records naively that, "The physicians came about him and sorely tormented him but they healed him not." If they prescribed anything at all similar to the palliatives of their Elizabethan descendants, life to De Brakelond cannot have been a boon. Dr Hall, M. A., the son-in-law of William Shakspeare, in his book *Select observations on English bodies, or cures both Empericall and Historicall performed upon very eminent persons in desperate Diseases*, prescribes powdered human skull and human fat; tonics of earth worms and snails, solution of goose excrements, frog spawn water, swallows' nests *etc.*

Among other recognised remedies in vogue, were pills made from the skull of a man that had been hanged; the powder of a mummy; jelly of vipers' skins; tips of crabs' claws taken when the sun was in the sign of Cancer, "oil of scorpions," "blood of dragons" and the various entrails of wild animals. A "physitian without astrologie" was deemed as useless and unworthy "as a pudden without fat." Dr Andrew Boorde—from whom it is said we derive the term "Merry Andrew"—recommended his patients to wipe their faces daily with a scarlet cloth and not to wash them oftener than once a week. Burton esteemed it "good overnight to anoint the face with hare's blood."<sup>1</sup> It was supposed that tumours were curable by being stroked with a dead man's hand. For the ague, the application of a spider in a nutshell lapped in silk, or chips from a hangman's tree were esteemed an

<sup>1</sup> *Anatomy of Melancholy* II. 294. York Library.

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excellent specific. Children were treated for rickets by being passed head downwards through a cloven tree, recovering as the tree healed. There is an allusion to this practise in White's *Natural History of Selborne*.

“ In a farm-yard near the middle of this village stands, at this day, (1776) a row of pollard ashes, which, by the seams and long cicatrices down their sides, manifestly show that in former times they have been cleft asunder. These trees, when young and flexible, were severed and held open by wedges, while ruptured children stripped naked were pushed through the apertures, under a persuasion that by such a process the poor babes would be cured of their infirmity. As soon as the operation was over, the tree in the suffering part was plastered with loam, and carefully swathed up. If the parts coalesced and soldered together, as usually fell out where the feat was performed with any adroitness at all, the party was cured ; but where the cleft continued to gape, the operation, it was supposed, would prove ineffectual. ”

It would be erroneous to suppose that these absurdities were prescribed merely by the lower orders. If anything, the specialists of the period display an ignorance and superstition more marvellous than that of the rank and file. Sir Theodore Mayern, born in 1573 and regarded as the greatest doctor of his day, numbering among his patients Henry IV and Louis XIII of France and James I, Charles I and Charles II of England, relied upon pulverised human bones and ‘raspings of a human skull unburied’. His balsam of bats (recommended for hypochondriacal persons) includ-

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ed among its ingredients adders, bats, sucking whelps, earthworms, hogs' grease, the marrow of a stag and the thighbone of an ox. For a child suffering from nervousness the prescription of Dr William Bulleyn, a celebrated physician who was akin to the Queen, was, "a smal yonge mouse, rosted." Even as late as the reign of King William and Mary we read of "crabs eyes" and "the juice of thirty hogslice at six o'clock at night" being administered by the *élite* of the profession to the royal patient. Next day, however, notwithstanding these palliatives, King William "looked very well and was cheerful!"

Rational medicine may be said to have been born in England only about a century and a half ago; abroad the condition of the Profession was probably inferior to that in London. For many years prior to 1684, the French Academy mustered only *one solitary anatomist*. In Spain the circulation of the blood was denied for a hundred and fifty years after Harvey's discovery! It is unnecessary to cite passages, but the dramatists were quite familiar with, and up to date in their knowledge of, the to-and-fro-to-the-heart movement of the blood through veins and arteries.

In addition to their knowledge of Physiology and Anatomy the 'catterpillars of the Commonwealth' exhibit an extensive acquaintance with the properties of drugs. In contrast to remedies then current, they display the modern spirit of Homeopathy. Note, for example, their ideas upon Aconite, or as Shakespeare, Webster, Middleton and the unknown author of *Loctrine* professionally term it "*aconitum*." Webster in *Appius and Virginia* says,

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Observe this rule, *one ill must cure another*  
As aconitum a strong poison brings  
A present cure against all serpents stings.

So also, Ben Jonson in *Sejanus*.<sup>1</sup>

I have heard that aconite  
Being timely taken hath a healing might  
Against the scorpions stroke : the proof we'll give  
That whilst two poisons wrestle, we may live.

The founder of the New Philosophy and the dramatists so far as I can trace always prescribe the same remedies : for instance—

I commend beads or pieces of the roots of *carduus benedictus*.

BACON (*Sylva Sylvarum*) 1622-1625.

Get you some of this distill'd *carduus benedictus*.

SHAKESPEARE (*Much Ado* III. 4.) 1600.

*Carduus benedictus* and mares milk were the only thing in the world for it.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Knight of Burning Pestle* III. 4.) 1611-1613.

With academic accuracy they describe hair and whiskers as excrement, employing the term in its strictly classical meaning, "*outgrowth*."<sup>2</sup>

O heavens, she comes accompanied with a child  
Whose chin bears no impression of manhood  
Not a hair not an excrement.

KYD (*Soliman* I. 3.) 1599.

The barber's snip snap of dexterity hath  
mowed off the excrements of slovenry.

FORD (*Fancies* v. 2.) 1638.

<sup>1</sup> (III. 3).

<sup>2</sup> The word was first coined in 1588 in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

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That excrement which they violently clip  
away from the heads of young men.

DEKKER (*Gull's Hornbook.*) 1609.

Hair and nails.... are excrements.

BACON (*Sylva Sylvarum*) 1627.

Hair.... is so plentiful an excrement.

SHAKESPEARE (*Comedy of Errors* II. 2.) 1623.

The dramatic use of the word 'pleurisy', or as it is generally spelt in modern editions, 'plurisy', is peculiar, it being misused in every case apparently for, 'plethora'. Its first employment is credited to Shakespeare, Professor Skeat considering it as "evidently formed as if from Latin *pluri*, crude form of *plus*; more by an extraordinary confusion with pleurisy."<sup>1</sup> I am, however, inclined to think that the word has crept into our language by a mistake. Tourneur in 1611 distinctly writes *pleurisie*. Greene in 1599 also obviously uses the word with a medical meaning.

Wounds must be cured when they be fresh  
And pleurisies when they begin to breed  
With little care are driven away with speed.

GREENE (*Alphonsus*) 1599.

Goodness, growing to a plurisy; dies.

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet* IV. 7.)<sup>2</sup> 1604.

I did deserve too much. A pleurisy

<sup>1</sup> Etymological Dictionary.

<sup>2</sup> This passage was omitted in the folio and only occurs in the quartos. In the 6th (1637) the word reads "pleurisie;" in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th "Plurisie." *Plurisie* was sometimes the mode of spelling the disease; see *The Garden of Health*. Langham 1633.

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Of that blood in me is the cause I die.  
Virtue in great men must be small and slight.

CHAPMAN (*Tragedy of Byron* v. 1.) 1605-1608.

Those too many excellencies that feed  
Your pride, turn to a plurisy and kill  
That which should nourish virtue.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Custom of Country* II. 2.)

1628-1647.

Thy plurisy of goodness is thy ill  
Thy virtues vices, and thy humble lowness  
Far worse than stubborn sullenness and pride.

MASSINGER (*Unnatural Combat* IV. 1) 1639.

Increased to such a pleurisie of lust.

TOURNEUR (*Atheists Tragedy* III. 1) 1611.

The pluresie of people.

FLETCHER (*Two Noble Kinsmen* v. 1.) 1634.

In their ideas upon the cause and maintenance of life the dramatists are unanimous with Bacon who, as he himself said, had been "puddering in physic" all his life, here and was able, according to his contemporaries, to "outcant a London chirurgeon."

A witty example of the dramatic powers of "outcating" is to be found in *The Fair Quarrel* of Thomas Middleton, a writer designated by Ben Jonson as "a base fellow."

*Act. IV. Scene 2. A Chamber in the Colonel's House.*

*The Colonel discovered lying on a couch, several of his Friends watching him: as the Surgeon is going out, the Colonel's Sister enters.*

*Col.'s Sist.* O my most worthy brother, thy  
[hard fate 'twas! —  
Come hither, honest surgeon, and deal faithfully

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With a distressed virgin : what hope is there ?

*Surg.* Hope ? Chilis was 'scaped miraculously,  
[lady.

*Col.'s Sist.* What's that, sir ?

*Surg.* Cava vena : I care but little for his wound i' the œsophag, not thus much, trust me ; but when they come to diaphragma once, the small intestines, or the spinal medul, or i' the roots of the emunctories of the noble parts, then straight I fear a syncope.

*Col.'s Sist.* Alas, I'm ne'er the better for this answer !

*Surg.* Now I must tell you his principal doulour lies i' the region of the liver, and there's both inflammation and tumefaction feared ; marry, I made him a quadrangular plumation, where I used sanguis draconis, by my faith, with powders incarnative, which I tempered with oil of hypericon, and other liquors mundificative.

*Col.'s Sist.* Pox a' your mundies figatives ! I would they were all fired !

*Surg.* But I purpose, lady, to make another experiment at next dressing with a sarcotic medicament made of iris of Florence ; thus, mastic, calaphena, opoponax, sacrocolla. —

*Col.'s Sist.* Sacro-halter ! what comfort is i' this to a poor gentlewoman ? pray tell me in plain terms what you think of him.

*Surg.* Marry, in plain terms I know not what to say to him. The wound I can assure you, inclines to paralism, and I find his body cacochymic : being then in fear of fever and inflammation, I nourish him altogether with viands refrigerative, and give for potion the



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juice of savicola dissolved with water cerefolium : I could do no more, lady, if his best ginglymus were dissevered. (Exit.

Ellis, in his preface to *Historia Vitæ et Mortis*<sup>1</sup> observes :—"The idea on which Bacon's idea of longevity is founded, namely, that the principle of life resides in a subtle fluid or spirit, which permeates the tangible parts of the organisation of plants and animals, seems to be coeval with the first origin of speculative physiology. Bacon was one of those by whom this idea was extended from organised to inorganised bodies. In all substances, according to him, resides a portion of spirit which manifests itself only in its operations, being altogether intangible and without weight. This doctrine appeared to be to him of most certain truth, but he has nowhere stated the grounds of his conviction, nor even indicated the kind of evidence by which the existence of the *spiritus* is to be established. In living bodies he conceived that two kinds of spirits exist ; a crude or mortuary spirit, such as is present in other substances, and the animal or vital spirit, to which the phenomena of life are to be referred. To keep this vital spirit, the wine of life, from oozing away ought to be the aim of the physician who attempts to increase the number of our few and evil days."

With what fidelity and dignity of language these ideas are reiterated by the obscene Marlowe !  
*Tamburlaine*. Tell me what think you of my sick-  
[ness now ?

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Bacon's Works*. Spedding, Vol. II, p. 91.

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My veins through which the blood and spirit  
take their way.

FLETCHER (*Faithful Shepherdess* II. 4.) 1610-1629.

O, be of *comfort*, sweet, call in thy *spirits*.

KYD (*Jeronimo* II. 4.) 1588-1605.

*Comfort* up the vital *spirits*.

FORD (*Broken Heart* IV. 3.) 1633.

Opiates taken in moderation..... *comfort* the  
*spirits*.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620.

'Tis deadly aconite to my cold heart

It *chokes* my vital *spirits*.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*False One* I. 4)

1620-1647.

*Choking* up at once my vital *spirits*.

MASSINGER (*Renegado* v. 6.) 1624-1630.

*Spirits*... sometimes are utterly *choked* and  
extinguished.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620

Our vital *spirits* crave some rest.

GREENE (*Friar Bacon*) 1594.

His vital *spirits* thereby spilled.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* IV. 7.) 1590-1609.

My vital powers forsake my bruised trunk.

ANON (*King John*) 1591.

Benignant medicaments..... invite the *spirits*  
to *unite*.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620

O God, how—O, how my *united* *spirits*  
throng together!

MARSTON (*Malcontent* III. 3.) 1604.

See how the *spirits* struggle to *recover*

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And how strongly reinforce their strengths !

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Queen of Corinth*  
II. 3.) 1618-1647.

Rose water applied to the nose in a fainting fit causes the relaxed spirits to *recover* themselves and as it were, cherishes them.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620.

The pure *blood* and the spirits 'scaped *untainted*.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Wife for a Month*  
v. 1.) 1624-1647.

The *veins* or humours..... *not* being *tainted* ; only a malign *vapour* flew to the heart and seized the vital spirits.

BACON (*Henry VII.*) 1621.

It tends to the intineration of the hard and stubborn parts of the body by the *detention of the spirit*.

BACON (*Life and Death*) 1623.

*Sleep*, which philosophers call a cessation of the common and consequently of all the exterior senses, caused first and immediately by a *detention of spirits* which can have no communication since the way is obstructed by which these spirits should commerce, by *vapours ascending* from the stomach *to the head* by which evaporation the roots of the nerves are filled, through which the animal spirits to be poured into the dwellings of the external senses....

CHAPMAN (*Admiral of France* III.) 1639.

*Fumes ascending to the head* disperse in all directions the spirits contained in the ventricles of the brain.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620.

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*Physician.* . . . . the hypostasis <sup>1</sup>

Thick and obscure doth make your danger great.  
Your veins are full of accidental heat  
Whereby the moisture of your blood is dried.  
The humidum and calor which some hold  
Is not a parcel of the elements  
But of a substance more divine and pure  
Is almost clean extinguished and spent  
Which, being the cause of life, imports your death.  
Besides, my lord, this day is critical ;  
Dangerous to those whose crisis is as yours  
Your arteries, which amongst the veins convey  
The lively spirits which the heart engenders  
Are parched and void of spirit, that the soul  
Wanting those organons by which it moves  
Cannot endure.

(*Tamburlaine, part II. v. 3.*) 1588-1592.

It is noteworthy that in a book written expressly for *the learned*, the author considered it necessary to go out of his way to expound the meaning of the "hard words" *spirit, vital, &c.* "Before I proceed to define the disease of melancholy, what it is, or to discourse further of it I hold it not impertinent to make a brief digression of the anatomy of the body and faculties of the soul for the better understanding of that which is to follow, because many hard words will often occur, as *myrach, hypochondries, hemrods, imagination, reason, humours, spirits, vital, natural, animal, nerves, veins, arteries, chylus, pituita*, which of the vulgar will not so easily be perceived, what they are."

(*Anatomy of Melancholy*), vol. I p. 168.

<sup>1</sup> Compare "Here's a hypostasis argues a very bad stomach" NABBES (*Microcosmos IV*) 1637.

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The following allusions to the vital spirits more fully exhibit Bacon's views and show how minutely (and to their ignorant auditors surely incomprehensibly,?) they were reflected upon the stage.

Spirits are nothing else but a natural body rarified. They are in all tangible bodies.

BACON (*Sylva Sylvarum*) 1627.

Great joys attenuate the spirits. Familiar cheerfulness strengthens the spirits..... In oily and fat things... the spirit is detained willingly.

IBID (*Life and Death*) 1623.

Fly phlebotomy and fresh pork.... they are all dullers of the vital spirits.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster* II. 2.)

1608-1620.

My spirits as in a *dream* are all bound up.

SHAKESPEARE (*Tempest* I. 2.) 1623.

The vital spirits that by a *sleepy charm* were bound up fast.

DEKKER (*Honest Whore* I. 3.) 1604.

Spirits are condensed by.... *sleep*.

BACON (*Novum Organum* Aph. L.) 1620.

Spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues.

SHAKESPEARE (*Measure for Measure* I. I.)

1604-1623.

Refine my spirits into a matter so subtle and divine.

LYLY (*Endymion* IV. 3.) 1591.

More subtle than the spirits in our blood.

SHIRLEY (*The Traitor* II. 2.) 1631-1635.

The nimble spirits in the arteries.

SHAKESPEARE (*Love's Labour's Lost* II. I) 1598.

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My veins through which the blood and spirit  
take their way.

FLETCHER (*Faithful Shepherdess* II. 4.) 1610-1629.

O, be of *comfort*, sweet, call in thy *spirits*.

KYD (*Jeronimo* II. 4.) 1588-1605.

*Comfort* up the vital *spirits*.

FORD (*Broken Heart* IV. 3.) 1633.

Opiates taken in moderation..... *comfort* the  
*spirits*.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620.

'Tis deadly aconite to my cold heart

It *chokes* my vital *spirits*.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*False One* I. 4)

1620-1647.

*Choking* up at once my vital *spirits*.

MASSINGER (*Renegado* v. 6.) 1624-1630.

*Spirits*... sometimes are utterly *choked* and  
extinguished.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620

Our vital *spirits* crave some rest.

GREENE (*Friar Bacon*) 1594.

His vital *spirits* thereby spilled.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* IV. 7.) 1590-1609.

My vital powers forsake my bruised trunk.

ANON (*King John*) 1591.

Benignant medicaments..... invite the *spirits*  
to *unite*.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620

O God, how—O, how my *united* *spirits*  
throng together!

MARSTON (*Malcontent* III. 3.) 1604.

See how the *spirits* struggle to *recover*

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And how strongly reinforce their strengths!

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Queen of Corinth*  
II. 3.) 1618-1647.

Rose water applied to the nose in a fainting fit causes the relaxed spirits to *recover* themselves and as it were, cherishes them.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620.

The pure *blood* and the spirits 'scaped *untainted*.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Wife for a Month*  
v. 1.) 1624-1647.

The *veins* or humours..... *not being tainted*; only a malign *vapour* flew to the heart and seized the vital spirits.

BACON (*Henry VII.*) 1621.

It tends to the intineration of the hard and stubborn parts of the body by the *detention of the spirit*.

BACON (*Life and Death*) 1623.

*Sleep*, which philosophers call a cessation of the common and consequently of all the exterior senses, caused first and immediately by a *detention of spirits* which can have no communication since the way is obstructed by which these spirits should commerce, by *vapours ascending* from the stomach *to the head* by which evaporation the roots of the nerves are filled, through which the animal spirits to be poured into the dwellings of the external senses....

CHAPMAN (*Admiral of France* III.) 1639.

*Fumes ascending to the head* disperse in all directions the spirits contained in the ventricles of the brain.

BACON (*Nov. Org. Aph. L.*) 1620.

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*Vapours* evidently operate powerfully upon the spirits, as is shewn by *sleep*.

BACON (*Life and Death*) 1623.

A subject which seems rarely to have been absent from the dramatic mind is the peculiarly unpleasant one of Ulcers and Imposthumations; the poets never tire of harping on this repulsive and essentially prosaic theme. They dwell upon detail with the unction of medical students, though it will be observed that in no instance do they recommend "stroking with a dead man's hand." The perils of inward bleeding were well understood, and equally well emphasized.

That same former fatal wound of his  
... was not thoroughly healed  
But closely rankled under th' orifice.

But yet the cause and root of all his ill  
Inward corruption and infected Sin  
Nor purged, nor healed, behind remained still  
And festering sore did rankle yet within.

... all mine entrails flow with pois'nous gore  
And th' ulcer groweth daily more and more.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* IV. 2. ; I. 10. and  
III. 2.) 1590-1609.

Let me see the wound.  
This herb will stay the current, being bound  
Fast to the orifice; and this, restrain  
Ulcers and swellings and such inward pain  
As the cold air hath forced into the sore.  
This, to draw forth such putrefying gore  
As inward falls.

FLETCHER (*Faithful Shepherdess* IV. 2.) 1610-1629.



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He that turneth the humours back and maketh the wound bleed inwards endangereth malign ulcers and pernicious imposthumations.

BACON (*Essay : Sedition*) 1627.

The medical aspect of this theme seems to have engrossed the mind of Bacon to such an unhealthy extent that we find him writing to the King and crediting an attack of headache to "an imposthumation."

It hath pleased God for these three days past to visit me with such extremity of headache..... that I thought verily it had been an imposthumation. And the little physic that I have told me, that either it must grow to a congelation and so to a lethargy, or break and so to a mortal fever or sudden death."

BACON (Letter to KING JAMES) 1621.

Not only do we find Bacon and the dramatists enlarging upon the medical aspect but the subject seems to have possessed such fascination that we find them persistently employing it as a metaphor.

Madam, said I, how wisely and aptly can you speak and discern of physic ministered to the body and consider not that there is the like occasion of physic ministered to the mind... You have drawn the humour sufficiently and therefore it were more than time, and it were but for doubt of mortifying or exulcerating, that you did apply and minister strength and comfort unto him.

BACON (*Apology concerning ESSEX*) 1603.

What a damned imposthume is a womans will!  
Can nothing break it?

WEBSTER (*White Devil* IV. I.) 1612.

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He would prove a rare firking satyrist  
And draw the core forth of imposthumed sin.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* III. 3.) 1602.

A surgeon here for this love wounded man !  
How deep's your ulcer'd orifice ? I pray you tell.

MACHIN (*Dumb Knight* II. I.) 1608.

Well, wel, seeing the wound that *bleedeth inwardly* is most dangerous, that fyre kept close burneth most furious, that ye Oven dammed up, baketh soonest, that *sores having no vent fester secretly*, it is hyghe tyme to unfolde my secret love to my secret friend.

LYLY (*Euphues*) Arber, 63. 1578-1580.

In his English Grammar we find Ben Jonson quoting from Sir John Cheke,

Sedition is an aposteam, which, when it breaketh inwardly, putteth the state in great danger of recovery ; and corrupteth the whole commonwealth with the rotten fury, that it hath putrified with.

With minds evidently predisposed Bacon and the dramatists seized eagerly upon this unsavoury State metaphor.

Take away liberty of Parliament, the griefs of the subject will bleed inwards ; sharp and eager humours will not evaporate, and then they must exulcerate, and so may endanger the sovereignty itself.

BACON (*Speech*) 1610.

The state is full of dangerous whispers  
There's an imposthume swells it  
Would 't were lanced.

FALKLAND (*Marriage Night* III. I.) 1664.

The people are up ! ....

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What's the imposthume that swells them now?  
Ulcers of realms!

MIDDLETON (*Mayor of Queenbro'* II. 3) 1661.

My lord, my lord, you wrong not yourself only but your whole state to suffer such ulcers as these to gather head in your court.

CHAPMAN (*Monsieur d'Olive* v. 1.) 1606.

The ulcers of an honest state, spite weavers  
That live on poison only like swoln spiders.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Wild Goose Chase*  
III. 1.) 1632-1647.

Have we maladies, and such imposthumes  
as Phantaste is, grow in our palace? We  
must lance these sores, or all will putrefy.

BEN JONSON (*Cynthia's Revels* v. 3) 1600.

Thou insolent imposthume!

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Island Princess*  
1. 3.) 1621-1647.

Noble gentleman? A tumour, an imposthume  
he is, Madam.

CHAPMAN (*Widows Tears* 1. 2.) 1612.

I have thought a cure for this great state  
imposthume. What? To lance it.

SHIRLEY (*Traitor* II. 1.) 1631-1635.

We are here to search the wounds of the  
realm and not to skin them over.

BACON (*Speech on Subsidy*) 1593.

Raking over antiquity Lyly finds and in  
*Euphues* revives an imposthume anecdote.

For as he that stroke Jason on the stomacke  
to kill him, brake his imposthume with ye  
blow, whereby he cured him: so oftentimes  
it fareth with those that deale maliciously, who

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in stead of a sword apply a salve, and thinking to be ones Priest, they become his Phisition.

LYLY (*Euphues*) Arber p. 330. 1578-1580.

In Bacon's *Promus* (MS. 1594) we find him jotting down a note of this, "The launching (lancing) of ye imposthume by him that intended murder." And in 1623 the story reappears again in a dramatic form.

He is speechless, Sir, and we do find his wound  
So festered near the vitals all our art  
By warm drinks cannot clear th'imposthumation  
And he's so weak to make incision  
By the orifex were present death to him

[*He is stabbed by an assassin*]

Ha! Come hither, note a strange accident  
His steel has lighted in the former wound  
And made free passage for the congeal'd blood  
Observe in what abundance it delivers  
The putrefaction.

WEBSTER (*Devils Law Case* III. 2.) 1623.

I have, I think, quoted enough examples of this subject. Was it a thought so deep, a conceit so alluring, that it was thus tossed from poet to poet and transferred successively from one great mind to another? Were the dramatists satisfied thus to play sedulous ape to each other? It is a question that must be frequently asked in connection with other subjects equally *outrés*. One of the playwrights actually tried to dramatise Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and introduces "Blood" "Phlegm," "Choler" & "Melancholy" amongst his *dramatis personae*!

In passing, it is noteworthy that, when irrit-

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ated, the playwrights seem usually to have had diseases uppermost in their minds. "The red plague rid you," says Caliban; Prospero's retort is, "I'll rack thee with old cramps; fill all thy bones with aches." The dramatic poets seem to have had the whole gamut of human afflictions on their tongue-tips. *Vide* for instance Ford's *Broken Heart* (II. 3. 1633) "Aches, Convulsions, Imposthumes, Rheums, Gouts, Palsies, clog thy bones!"

"Diseases desperate," says Shakespeare, "by desperate appliance are relieved,"<sup>1</sup> — a tenet held in common with his fellows —

Extreme diseases ask extreme remedies.

CHAPMAN (*All Fools* v. 1.) 1605.

Diseases desperate must find cures alike.

FORD (*Broken Heart* III. 2.) 1633.

In cases desperate there must be used medicines that are extreme.

LYLY (*Campaspe* III. 5.) 1582-1584.

Apply desperate physic.

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* II. 5.) 1616-1623.

I strove to cure a desperate evil with a more violent remedy.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Laws of Candy*  
v. 1.) 1647.

But though redolent of physic the drama maintained that it was wiser to hew and vex the root of illness than to tinker with external symptoms. "It is," as Bacon says, "in vain to cure the accidents of a disease except the cause be found and removed."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hamlet*. IV. 3.

<sup>2</sup> (Letter to Buckingham) 1621.

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Avoid th' occasion of the ill  
For when the cause whence evil doth arise  
Removéd is, th' effect surceaseth.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* VI. 6.) 1590-1609.

Cut off the cause and then the effect will die.

ANON (*King John*) 1591.

Remove the cause and then the effect will die.

KYD (*Soliman* IV. I.) 1599.

Lacy the cause.....

Take him away and then the effects will fail.

GREENE (*Friar Bacon*) 1594.

Kill the effect by cutting off the cause.

PORTER (*Two Angry Women* V. I.) 1599.

Take away the cause the effect must follow.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Monsieur Thomas*  
I. 4.) 1639.

The dramatists were as keenly alive as Bacon to the importance of mental therapeutics and the necessity of *mens sana in corpore sano*.

The body's wounds by medicines may be eased  
But griefs of mind by salves are not appeased.

GREENE (*James IV*) 1598.

You may take *sarza* to open the liver, flower of sulphur for the lungs, *castoreum* for the brain but no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend.

BACON (*Essay : Friendship*) 1625.

This herb will purge the eye, and this the head  
Ah ! but none of them will purge the heart  
No ! theres no medicine left for my disease.

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* III. 9.) 1594-1602.

The best preservative to keep the mind in health is the faithful admonitions of a friend....

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When all is done the help of good *counsel* is that which setteth business straight.

BACON (*Essay : Friendship*) 1625.

Give salve to every sore but *counsel* to the mind.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* VI. 6.) 1590-1609.

*Counsel*, dear Princess, is a choice relief.

GREENE (*James IV*) 1598.

*Counsel*. that is chief and choicest medicine for sick hearts relief.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* III. 3.) 1590-1609.

Bacon and the dramatists alike urge the desirability of giving words to sorrow.

Avoid.... sadness not communicated.

BACON (*Essay : Regiment of Health*) 1625.

Give sorrow words : the grief that will not speak  
Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.

SHAKESPEARE (*Macbeth* IV. 3.) 1623.

Grief must be speechless ere the heart can break.

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* IV.) 1613.

He oft finds medicine who his grief imparts  
But double griefs afflict concealing hearts.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen*. I. II. 34.)

1590-1609.

Poor heart, break.

Those are the killing griefs which dare not speak.

WEBSTER (*White Devil* II. 1.) 1612.

The dramatists considered the Soul to be analogous to a stringed instrument of which the faculties were strings. Thus Shakespeare in *Pericles* (I. I.) " You are a fair viol and your sense the strings, " and Massinger in *A Very Woman* (IV. I.)

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Every souls alike a musical instrument  
The faculties in all men equal strings.

According to Francis Bacon " the office of medicine is but to tune this curious harp of mans body and reduce it to harmony. "

This striking and beautiful metaphor appears and reappears so constantly in the Elizabethan Drama that it may unhesitatingly be said to have been the keynote of the Symphony.

How sour sweet music is when time is  
lost and no proportion kept.

So is it in the music of men's lives.

SHAKESPEARE (*Richard II.*) 1597.

I am at much variance within myself  
There's discord in my blood.

WEBSTER (*Appius and Virginia* I. 3.) 1654.

In you tis the most harsh displeasing discord.

SHIRLEY (*Hyde Park* I. 2.) 1637.

I find no music in these boys.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster* II. 4.) 1620.

The man that hath no music in himself  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils.

SHAKESPEARE (*Merchant of Venice*) 1600.

O innocence.... that makes a man in tune  
still in himself !

CHAPMAN (*Conspiracy of Byron* v. I.) 1605-1608.

My *patience* is too much out of tune.

DAY (*Humour out of breath* III. I.) 1608.

The *spirit of Job* was in a better tune.

BACON (*Essay: Revenge*) 1625.

I'll string myself with heavy sounding wire  
Like such an instrument that speaks merry things  
[sadly.

TOURNEUR (*Revenger's Tragedy* IV. 2.) 1607.



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I have sounded the very base string of humility.

SHAKESPEARE (*1 Henry IV.* III. 4.) 1598.

You touched a string to which my sense was quick.

MARSTON (*Sophonisba* III. 1.) 1606.

Touch no more that string, 'tis too harsh  
and jarring.

FLETCHER (*Monsieur Thomas* I. 1.) 1639.

The stroke jars in my brother, 't will be  
villainous music.

TOURNEUR (*Revenger's Tragedy* IV. 1.) 1607.

Why should his voice keep tune  
When theres no music in the breast of man?

MARSTON (*Antonio* IV. 5.) 1602.

Thou art deceived at least in this  
To think that we can yet be tuned together.  
No, no, we jar too far.

MARLOWE (*Edward II.*) 1593-1598.

You are strangely out of tune, Sir.

FORD (*Love's Sacrifice* I. 2.) 1633.

This music makes me but more out of tune.

DEKKER (*Old Fortunatus* III. 1.) 1600.

The music runs too far out of tune.

DAY (*Humour out of Breath* II. 2.) 1608.

I am out of tune.

MASSINGER (*Renegado* III. 4.) 1624-1630.

This variable composition of mans body  
hath made it an instrument easy to distemper  
and therefore the poets did well to conjoin  
music and medicine in Apollo, because the  
office of medicine is but to tune this curious  
harp of mans body and reduce it to harmony.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning* Bk. II.)  
1603-1605.

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Set either thy body or mine in tune.

LYLY (*Campaspe* v. 4.) 1582-1584.

Come, put yourself in tune!

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* II. 3.) 1616-1623.

I'll tune myself.

TOURNEUR (*Revenger's Tragedy* IV. I.) 1607.

I am in tune.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster* II. 4.)  
1613-1620.

Love decks the countenance, spiriteth the eye  
And tunes the soul in sweetest harmony.

CHAPMAN (*Blind Beggar of Alexandria*) 1598.

The strings of my heart are tuned .... there  
is no base string in a womans heart.

LYLY (*Love's Metamorphosis* III. I.) 1601.

How fair is she that makes thy music mount  
And every string of thy heart's harp to move.

GREENE (*Menaphon*) 1589.

The discords of my soul are tuned  
And make a Heavenly harmony.

MASSINGER (*A Very Woman* IV. 3.) 1634-1655.

But still it must be remembered that the  
stringing of the harp, nor the tuning of it, will  
not serve except it be well played on from  
time to time.

BACON (Letter to BUCKINGHAM) 1620.

I had been content to tune the instruments  
of the Muses.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

His mighty hand

Whose cunning tunes the music of my soul.

PEELE (*David and Bathsheba*) 1599.

We seem to have wandered a very long way from

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the Barbers Surgeons and Apothecaries ; from 'the juice of thirty hogslice,' and 'a smal yonge mouse rosted.' But in reality the border line between physics and metaphysics is non-existent. Bacon writing to Father Baranzano in 1622 truly observed, "Be not troubled about the metaphysics. When true physics have been discovered there will be no metaphysics. Beyond the true physics is Divinity itself."

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The vulgar's a kennel of black mouthed dogs  
that worry mens deserts and fame. My curse  
fester in their temples!

FALKLAND (*Marriage Night* II.) 1664.

A sudden rot consume this base herd....  
the ribble rabble!

SHIRLEY (*The Traitor*) 1631-1635.

All damnations seize on the hydra headed  
multitude that only gape for innovations!  
O who would trust a people.... curse on the  
inconstant rabble!

WEBSTER (*Appius and Virginia* v. 3.) 1654.

I'll not trust the rabble : confusion on 'em  
the giddy multitude!

SHIRLEY (*The Traitor*) 1631-1635.

"Thanks to the Gods!" ejaculates the un-  
known author of *Timon*, "I am not of the  
rags or fag end of the people!" "I," says  
Shakespeare, "will not jump with common spirits  
and rank me with the barbarous multitude;"<sup>1</sup> a  
sentiment which is thus re-choed by Dekker:—

I scorned to crowd among the muddy throng  
Of the rank multitude, whose thickened breaths,  
Like to condensed fog, do choke that beauty  
Which else would dwell in every Kingdoms cheek.<sup>2</sup>

The proximity of the crowd outraged the delicate  
susceptibilities of the dramatic Nostril. In his  
abhorrence of "the mutable rank scented many."  
Shakespeare was neither singular nor peculiar.

What air to cool us but poisoned with  
their blasting breaths and curses!

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Bonduca* II. I.) 1619-1647.

<sup>1</sup> *Merchant of Venice* II. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Old Fortunatus* II. 2.

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You.... whose breaths infect the air!

LYLY (*Campaspe* IV. 1.) 1582-1584.

This forkéd rabble with their infectious acclamations.

MIDDLETON (*Mayor of Quinborough* I. 1.) 1661.

The unsavoury breath of multitudes  
Shouting and clapping with confused din.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* IV. 4.) 1602.

The rabblement shouted and clapped their chopped hands, and threw up their sweaty night caps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath.... that it almost choked Caesar for he swooned and fell down at it. For my part, I durst not laugh for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air.

SHAKESPEARE (*Julius Caesar* 1. 2.) 1623.

I perceive few traces that the dramatists played down to the level of the crowd, on the contrary they are unsparing in their dislike and contempt.

The writer of the preface to *Troilus and Cressida* mentions that the play had never been "clapperclawed by the palms of the vulgar," and adds, "Refuse not, nor like this the less for not being sullied with the smoaky breath of the multitude." Similarly in the introduction to his *White Devil* Webster bluntly remarks that, "The breath that comes from the uncapable multitude is able to poison it." One can only marvel that the groundlings and "unapprehending stinkards," as Chapman terms them, did not more frequently resent the aspersions dropped on them from the stage. Taine relates that it was not uncustomary for the crowd to mob a dull or unpopular actor,

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toss him in a blanket, or express even more effectively their sense of injury and dissatisfaction.

In their hatred of Democracy the authors of the slum-born Drama display an unswerving unanimity; worthy of notice, not only on its own account, but as shedding additional light on the status of the crowds on whose pennies they existed. I have collected a few references and grouped them into their natural orders, adding here and there an expression of opinion from the philanthropist Bacon. "Shakespeare," says Gervinus, "despised the million, and Bacon feared with Phocion the applause of the multitude."

It has been charged against Bacon that he was far too grave to be a true Humanist. "Hence," says a modern critic, "we actually find him saying, 'I do not love the word *people*.' One of his chief characteristics is a lack of sympathy for the popular mind — a flagrant dislike of all democracy. Bacon lived in the Court, and he wrote as one writing for the courtiers and nobles."

The meaner sort.

BACON (*Henry VII*) 1622.

The vulgar sort.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

The vulgar sort.

ANON (*King John*) 1591.

The vulgar sort.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* III. 40) 1590-1609.

The vulgar sort.

SHAKESPEARE (I *Henry VI*. III. 2.) 1623.

The common sort.

MARLOWE (*Edward II*) 1593-1598.

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The common sort.

CHAPMAN (*Alphonsus* IV. 3.) 1636-1654.

The baser sort.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

The vulgar, liberal of their tongues.

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* III. 14.) 1594-1602.

The base vulgar.

SPENSER (*Tears of Muses*) 1591.

The natural depravity and malignant disposition of the vulgar.

BACON (*Wisdom of Ancients*) 1609.

The vulgar, mad and rude

Repay good with ingratitude.

KYD (*Cornelia* IV. 1.) 1595.

*Cornelia* is a translation from the French. The original text reads simply — "*le peuple*," but like Bacon, Kyd disliked the word "*people*" and embittered it into "*the vulgar, mad and rude*."

Beast with *many heads*.

BACON (Charge against TALBOT) 1614.

He himself stuck not to call us the *many headed* multitude.

SHAKESPEARE (*Coriolanus* II. 3.) 1623.

O this *many headed* multitude, 'tis a hard matter to please them!

ANON (*Lingua* II. 3) 1607.

Monster with *many heads*.

BACON (*Conference of Pleasure*) 1592.

Beast with *many heads*.

SHAKESPEARE (*Coriolanus* IV. 1.) 1623.

Was ever feather so lightly blown to fro as this multitude?

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry VI.* IV. 8) 1623.

## ELIZABETHAN AUDIENCES

The vulgar who are always swelling and rising against their rulers, and endeavouring at changes.

BACON (*Wisdom of the Ancients*) 1609.

This same *many headed* beast the people, violent and so non-constant in affections, subject to love of novelty.

CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* II. I.) 1654.

Beast with *many heads*.... the inconstant people.

MARSTON (*Malcontent* II. 3. and v. 3.) 1604.

That wild beast multitude.

DEKKER (*Old Fortunatus*) 1600.

Will that wide throated beast, the multitude, never cease bellowing?... This forked rabble with their infectious acclamations.

MIDDLETON (*Mayor of Quinborough* I. I.) 1661.

*Many headed*<sup>1</sup> monster multitude.

MASSINGER (*Emperor of the East* II. I.).

1630-1632.

This wild monster multitude.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck* II. I.) 1634.

Th'ignoble multitude inflamed with madness.

NABBES (*Microcosmos* v.) 1637.

The credulous beast the multitude.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Beggars' Bush* I. I.)

1622-1647.

The vulgar sort that still are led with every light report.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* IV. I.) 1590-1609.

<sup>1</sup> In the Republic (ix, 588) the human soul is compared to a multitudinous many headed monster. The Stoic, Ariston of Chios, calls the people a πολυκέφαλον θηρίον Hence Horace's *belua multorum capitum* (Epist. I. I. 76). *Shakespeare's Books*. (Anders,) p. 276.



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- This green and soggy multitude.  
BEN JONSON (*Every man out of his Humour*  
III. 3.) 1599-1600.
- Lousy, impudent multitude, a many headed  
and many horned generation.  
SHIRLEY (*The Traitor*) 1631-1635.
- The great herd, the multitude.  
BEN JONSON (*Discoveries*) 1641.
- The ignorant and rude multitude, the vulgar.  
BACON (*Wisdom of the Ancients*) 1609.
- The rude multitude... gaping for the spoil.  
HEYWOOD (*English Traveller* II. I.) 1633.
- The base multitude.  
BACON (*Henry VII*) 1622.
- The giddy multitude.  
SHAKESPEARE (2 *Henry VI*. II. 4.) 1623.
- The giddy multitude.  
BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Little French Lawyer*  
II. I.) 1647.
- The staggering multitude.  
MARSTON (*Malcontent* II. 3.) 1604.
- The unsteady multitude.  
FORD (*Lover's Melancholy* II. I.) 1629.
- The unsteady multitude.  
BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Laws of Candy*) 1647.
- The giddy people.  
CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* II. I.) 1654.
- The giddy rout.  
MASSINGER (*Roman Actor* III. 2.) 1626-1629.
- The Chorus continues, mordant in its unanimity  
and contempt.
- The abject people.  
SHAKESPEARE (2 *Henry VI*) 1623.

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The tag rag people.... the common herd.

SHAKESPEARE (*Julius Cæsar* I. 2.) 1623.

The rascal rabblement.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* III. 40.) 1590-1609.

The kennel rout of muddy brains.

MARSTON (*Scourge*) 1599.

Iron handed plebeians.... bawling hounds.

DAY (*Humour out of Breath* v. 2.) 1608.

[Surely this roused dissentient murmurs from the pit ?]

More of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians.

SHAKESPEARE (*Coriolanus* II. I.) 1623.

Barber-surgeons, butchers, and such base mechanical persons.

BACON (*Star Chamber Note on duelling*)

I hate them as I do the riots of your inconstant rabble.

MIDDLETON (*Mayor of Quinborough* I. I.) 1661.

The huge mountebank, the vulgar rout.

FALKLAND (*Marriage Night* I. I.) 1664.

The dung scum rabble of thin brained idiots, dull, incapable.

MARSTON (*Scourge*) 1599.

Rabble and scum of desperate people..... wild beasts as it were.<sup>1</sup>

BACON (*Henry VII.*) 1622.

The dunghill millions.

ANON (*Sir John Oldcastle*) 1600.

<sup>1</sup> This allusion is to Perkin Warbeck's rebel army.

## ELIZABETHAN AUDIENCES

The mutable, rank scented many.

SHAKESPEARE (*Coriolanus* III. I.) 1623.

That rascal many.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* v. 40) 1590-1609.

A rascal rout.

IBID (*Ibid.* v. 6.).

This rascal rout.

ANON (*Timon*) 1600.

The common rabble.

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1600.

The common rout.

SHAKESPEARE (*Comedy of Errors* III. I.) 1623.

The rout of the idolatrous vulgar.

MARSTON (*What you will* III. I.) 1607.

In his royalty of intellect Shakespeare alludes even to the Honorable Members of the House of Commons as "rude, unpolished hinds,"<sup>1</sup> a phrase which one can only marvel did not cost the writer his liberty, his ears, or his life.

In the *Religio Medici* Sir Thomas Browne gathers up nearly all the choleric epithets employed by the dramatist and presents them in one short paragraph. "If there be any among those common objects of hatred I do contemn and laugh at, it is that great enemy of reason, virtue, and religion—the *multitude*; that numerous piece of monstrosity which, taken asunder, seem men and the reasonable creatures of God, but *confused together* make but one *great beast* and a *monstrosity* more prodigious than *Hydra*. It is no breach of charity to call these fools.... Neither in the name of multitude do I only include *the*

<sup>1</sup> *Henry VI.*

## ELIZABETHAN AUDIENCES

*base* and *minor sort* of people. There is a *rabble* even among the gentry; a sort of *plebeian* heads whose fancy moves with the same wheel as these men, in the same level with *mechanics* though their fortunes do somewhat gild their infirmities, *the vulgar.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare the last half of this paragraph with Ben Jonson's *Discoveries* (1641), "Nor think this only to be true in the sordid multitude, but the neater sort of our gallants. For *all* are the multitude only they differ in clothes not in judgment or understanding."

## CHAPTER IX

### CLASSICISMS

A conspicuous feature of the Elizabethan Drama is its ultra-classicism. Professor Arber in his preliminary notes to *The Return from Parnassus* observes that this particular play is strewn with so many Latin quotations that it was "evidently only intended for a university audience." But this same exaggerated taste for Latin, and for French, Italian, and Spanish phrases is equally conspicuous in the plays dashed off for a living and for popular applause. The actors Kemp and Burbage, introduced among the characters of *The Return from Parnassus*, remark just as one would expect, that, "Few of the university pen plays well, they smell too much of that writer Ovid and that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter:" yet, nearly all the drama as it has come down to us, whether the authors had had the advantage of a University training—such as it was—or were merely unlettered actors, is saturated with classicisms. The following scene from *The Brazen Age* (1613) of Thomas Heywood is characteristically overloaded.

*Jason.* Alas ! *this* Hercules ?

This is some base effeminate groom, not he  
That with his puissance frighted all the earth :

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- This is some woman, some Hermaphrodite.
- Hercules.* Hath Jason, Nestor, Castor, Telamon,  
Atreus, Pollux, all forgot their friend ?  
We are the man.
- Jason.* Woman, we know thee not :  
We came to seek the Jove-born Hercules,  
That in his cradle strangled Juno's snakes,  
And triumph'd in the brave Olympic games.  
He that the Cleonean lion slew,  
The Erymanthian Boar, the Bull of Marathon,  
The Lernean Hydra, and the winged Hart.
- Telamon.* We would see the Theban  
That Cacus slew, Busiris sacrificed,  
And to his horses hurl'd stern Diomed  
To be devour'd.
- Pollux.* That freed Hesione  
From the sea whale, and after ransack'd Troy,  
And with his own hand slew Laomedon.
- Nestor.* He by whom Dercilus and Albion fell ;  
He that Œcalia and Betricia won.
- Atreus.* That monstrous Geryon with his three  
[heads vanquish'd,  
With Linus, Lichas that usurp'd in Thebes,  
And captived there his beauteous Megara.
- Pol.* That Hercules by whom the Centaurs fell,  
Great Achelous, the Stymphalides,  
And the Cremona giants : where is he ?
- Tel.* That traitorous Nessus with a shaft transfix'd,  
Strangled Antheus, purged Augeas' stalls,  
Won the bright apples of the Hesperides.
- Jas.* He that the Amazonian baldrick won ;  
That Achelous with his club subdued,  
And won from him the pride of Caledon,  
Fair Deianeira, that now mourns in Thebes  
For absence of the noble Hercules !

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This display of erudition may have been edifying to the classic tastes of the authors, but one is entitled to question whether it were not a little harassing to the impatient auditors who were certainly not persons of exalted sense. Dekker warns gallants against the perils of unpopularity on the stage "Though the scarecrows in the yard hoot at you, hiss at you, spit at you; yea, throw dirt even in your teeth, 'tis a most gentlemanlike patience to endure all this and to laugh at the silly animals. But if the rabble with a full throat cry 'Away with the fool,' you were worse than a madman to tarry by it."<sup>1</sup> Foreign observers describe the English of this period not as thirsting for the classics, but as being fierce and given to spectacle "fond of great ear-filling noises such as cannon firing, drum beating, and bell-ringing."<sup>2</sup>

The author of *Selimus*, recognising this public taste for the horrible, concludes his Epilogue apologetically

If this part gentles, do not like you well  
The second part shall greater murders tell.

The relentless doses from the classics which were administered so persistently and so methodically, one can only suppose, led frequently to disorder, falling off in revenue, and to the derisive taunt thrown at the stagekeeper in *The Return from Parnassus*: — "You may do better to busie yourself in providing beere; for the show will be pittifull dry, pittifull dry."

Whether plays were really staged in the 'pitti-

1 *Gull's Hornbook*.

2 Meteren, see intro. to Goadby's *Engl. of Shakespeare*.

## CLASSICISMS

full dry' form in which some of them have come down to us ; whether they flew far over the hearers' heads ; or whether the acting versions were something very different, is a question which it is unnecessary to labour. Henslowe's Diary is sufficient proof that many productions answering to the titles of those published were actually acted and drew large and profitable crowds ; it is however a legitimate surmise whether the severely classical portions were not reduced to a more familiar strain, and tempered by shrewd actor managers to the tastes and understandings of the penny knaves. " Our audience," says a player in *The Hog bath lost his Pearl* " commonly are very simple, idle headed people and if they should hear what they understand not they would quite forsake our house. "

There are some scenes in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* which are seemingly *apropos* this point. Cokes, (an esquire of Harrow) interrogating Leatherhead, [an impresario,] enquires with regard to *Hero and Leander* :

But do you play it according to the printed book ? I have read that.

*Leatherhead.* By no means, Sir.

*Cokes.* No ! How then ?

*Leatherhead.* A better way, Sir. That is too learned and poetical for our audiences. What do they know what *Hellespont* is, or *guilty of true love's blood* ? Or what *Abydos* is ? or the other *Sestos hight* ?

*Cokes.* Thou art in the right. I do not know myself.



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*Leatherhead.* No. I have entreated Master Littlewit to take a little pains to reduce it to a more familiar strain for our people.

*Cokes.* How I pray thee, good Master Littlewit.

*Littlewit.* ....I have only made it a little easy and modern for the times Sir, that's all. As for the *Hellespont* I imagine our Thames here ; and then Leander I make a dyers son about Puddle Wharf, and Hero a wench o' the Bankside, who, going over one morning to Old Fish Street, Leander spies her land at Trig stairs and falls in love with her. Now do I introduce Cupid, having metamorphosed himself into a drawer, and he strikes Hero in love with a pint of Sherry and other pretty passages. (v. 3.) 1614.

Then follows a skit on Hero and Leander parallel to the Pyramus and Thisbe interlude in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

It is usually a correct assumption that the Clergy are the best educated class in the community. Certainly in the Elizabethan epoch this was so ; yet from the record of the Chaplain of the Archbishop of Canterbury we learn that in the year 1563, of 116 clergymen in the Archdeaconry of London, 42 were almost Latinless, 13 had no tincture of classic learning whatever and 4 were 'indocti,' so uniformly ignorant and untrained that their tenure of clerical offices was scandalous. Of the other 57 ecclesiastics, 3 were described as "*docti latine et graece*," 12 as "*docti*," 2 as "*mediocriter docti*," 9 as "*latine docti*," whilst against the names of the remaining

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31 were appended the words "*latine mediocriter intell.*"<sup>1</sup>

If the London clergy were thus unlearned, it would be superfluous to deprecate the ignorance of Cokes the "Esquire of Harrow." To the plebeian crowd fully one half of the Elizabethan drama must have been caviare utterly beyond their reach. Even the titles were too much for Henslowe the proprietor of the Rose Theatre. We find him for instance gravelled by *Titus Andronicus*—or "*Titus and Ondronicus*" as he styles it in his Diary.

It is strange that the actor dramatists display a contrariety in nature by depicting their profession, not as the salt of the Earth, but in colours as contemptible as public estimation regarded it. Everywhere with the exception of perhaps in *Hamlet* and *The Roman Actor* we find the stage player exhibited as an ignorant and ridiculous windbag, raising a tempest with his lungs and thundering with his heels; arriving on the stage with a huge word and a great trample; tearing a passion to rags; leering with a saucy glavering grace and exhibiting neither the gait nor accent of a Christian. The anonymous author of *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) represents him as incapable of speaking the Queen's English.

Now Sir, what store of plays have you?

1st *Player*. Marry my Lord, you may have a tragical or a commodity, or what you will.

2nd *Player*. A comedy thou should'st say. Zounds thou't shame us all!

The abundance of similar testimony adds to our

1 See "*A Book about the Clergy*," Jeaffreson. vol. II. p. 286

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perplexity not merely as to how an Elizabethan audience appreciated the superfluity of foreign quotations and classical allusions, but how the players ever succeeded in mouthing them.

But the dramatists were not satisfied with mere naked and pedantic references to the tales and fables of antiquity; they infused these with metaphorical meanings and embroidered them with imagery. In this respect their treatment of the story of Orpheus is noteworthy as it coincides to minute detail with the "deep and rich" interpretation placed upon it by Francis Bacon in *De Sapientia Veterum*.

Bacon observes, "Upon deliberate consideration, my judgment is that a concealed instruction and allegory was originally intended in many of the ancient fables. This opinion may, in some respect, be owing to the veneration I have for antiquity, but more to observing that some fables discover a great and evident similitude, relation, and connection with the thing they signify, as well in the structure of the fable as in the propriety of the names whereby the persons or actors are characterized; insomuch, that no one could positively deny a sense and meaning to be from the first intended, and purposely shadowed out in them."

In the prefatory dedication he states. "But if any one should reckon trite the things set before him, I reply that plainly it is not for me to judge of the result of my efforts; but my object has been to pass beyond the obvious, the ordinary and the common-place, and to throw some light upon the difficult things of life, and the secrets of science. Thus though to the vulgar comprehension my work will seem vulgar, yet perhaps

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it will not fail the loftier understanding, but rather, as I hope, lead it onwards."

I am convinced that Bacon regarded his treatment of the Orpheus legend as his expository *chef d'œuvre*: he alludes to it so frequently and so lovingly. In his *Discourse on the Plantation in Ireland* he says that the fable was "anciently interpreted of the reducing and plantation of kingdoms; when people of barbarous manners are brought to give over and discontinue their customs of revenge and blood and of dissolute life and of theft and rapine, and to give ear to the wisdom of laws and governments."<sup>1</sup>

But I have not been able to trace the "ancient interpretation" to which, in what I think is merely a modest figure of speech, he thus refers. In *De Sapientia Veterum*, published a year later in 1609,<sup>2</sup> he unequivocally asserts that, "The fable of Orpheus though trite and common has never been well interpreted." That his exposition was new, deep, rich, and original he evidently believed. "For myself therefore I expect to appear *new* in these common things, because, leaving such as are sufficiently plain and open I shall drive only at those that are either deep or rich." The exposition he then puts forward is as follows:

"The meaning of this fable appears to be thus: — Orpheus music is of two sorts.... the first may be fitly applied to natural philosophy, the second to moral or *civil discipline*.... Philosophy.... by persuasion and eloquence insinuating the love

<sup>1</sup> *Discourse on the Plantation in Ireland* 1608. Spedding IV. p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> "Done into English" in 1619.

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of virtue, equity, and concord in the minds of man, draws multitudes of men to a society, makes them subject to laws, obedient to government. ”

How profoundly deep a hold this notion had upon his mind is testified by the fact that in the grounds of his home at Gorhambury he erected a statue of Orpheus inscribed PHILOSOPHY PERSONIFIED.

It has already been shewn that Bacon and the dramatists regarded the Soul as a musical instrument. It is a pregnant fact that Bacon viewed *the Stage* as the archet or bow with which to play upon this instrument ; Poetry, apparently as the resin with which to make this bowstring bite. His words are, “ True History through the frequent satiety and similitude of things works a distaste and misprision in the mind of man ; Poesy cheereth and refresheth the soul, chanting things rare and various and full of vicissitudes. So, as Poesy serveth and conferreth to Delectation, Magnanimity and Morality ; therefore it may seem deservedly to have some participation of Divineness, because it doth raise the mind and exalt the spirit with high raptures by proportioning the shews of things to the desires of the mind ; and not submitting the mind to things, as Reason and History do. And by these allurements and congruities, whereby it cherisheth the soul of man ; joined also with consort of Music, whereby it may more sweetly insinuate itself, it hath won such access that it hath been in estimation even in rude times and barbarous nations when other Learning stood excluded. Dramatical or Representative Poesy which brings the World upon the stage is of excellent use if it were not abused.

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For the instructions and corruptions of the stage may be great ; but the corruptions in this kind abound ; the discipline is altogether neglected in our times. For although in modern Commonwealths stageplays be but esteemed a sport or pastime unless it draw from the satire and be mordant ; yet the care of the Ancients was that it should instruct the minds of men unto Virtue. Nay, wise men and great Philosophers have accounted it as the Archet or musical Bow of the Mind. And certainly it is most true, and as it were a secret of nature, that the minds of men are more patent to affections and impressions congregate than solitary. ” <sup>1</sup>

Gervinus perspicuously notes that the aim of Shakespeare was to root up and expel the inimical powers of the mind ; alluring disordered souls and vulgar passions to worthy aims. He states, “The relation of Shakespeare’s poetry to morality and to moral influence upon men is most perfect. In this respect from Aristotle to Schiller nothing higher has ever been asked of Poetry than that which Shakespeare rendered. If Bacon felt the lack of a Science of human passions he rightly thought that Historians and Poets supplied this science and he might well have searched for it before all in the writings of his neighbour Shakespeare ; for no other poetry has taught as his has done by reminders and warnings that the taming of the passions is the aim of human civilisation. ” <sup>2</sup>

The views of the other poet-philosophers of this period upon the taming of the passions (see

<sup>1</sup> *Advancement of Learning* Bk. II Ch. XIII.

<sup>2</sup> *Commentaries*, p. 890.

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*ante* p. 88) disprove the singularity of Shakespeare in this nobility of aim. It was in truth the *motif* of the Elizabethan drama. Philosophy in the shape of Orpheus seems to have brooded like a Spirit over the theatrical hacks touching the different toned harp of each, ever with the same bewitching melody.

The following passages reveal this underlying thought.

Methought I sat like Orpheus, casting reins  
on savage beasts.

CHAPMAN (*Byron* v. 1.) 1605-1608.

Orpheus

That drew *men* differing little then from beasts  
To *civil* government.

MASSINGER (*Parliament of Love*) 1624.

Poets write that Orpheus made the trees  
And stones to dance to his melodious harp  
*Meaning, the rustic and the barbarous binds*  
That had no understanding part in them.

HEYWOOD (*Woman killed by Kindness*) 1607.

Apollo's <sup>1</sup> lyre, whose sprightly fires  
Have tamed rude beasts and *charmed men's wild*  
[*desires.*

JOHN DAY (*Humour out of Breath* 1. 1.) 1608.

If the touch of sweet concordant strings  
Could force attendance in the ears of Hell  
How much more shall the strains of poets wit  
Beguile and ravish soft and human minds.

ANON (*Edward III.* III. 1.) 1596.

The Bacchides-like character of the crowd—  
differing little then from beasts—and its bestial  
instincts are figured by Marston.

1 Orpheus was by some writers said to be the son of Apollo.

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But if poor Orpheus sing melodiously  
And strive with Music's sweetest symphony  
To praise the gods, and unadvisedly  
Do but o'erstep one drunken deity  
Forthwith the boozing Bacchus out doth send  
His furious Bacchides to be revenged  
And straight they tear the sweet musician.

(*Satyres*) 1598.

We find the same idea in Bacon. In *De Sapientia Veterum* he writes :—

“The most excellent remedy, in every temptation, is that of Orpheus, who, by loudly chanting and resounding the praises of the gods, confounded the voices and kept himself from hearing the music of the Sirens; for divine contemplations exceed the pleasures of sense, not only in power but also in sweetness.”

In the introduction to *The Advancement of Learning* he observes somewhat bitterly :—

“The doctrines in greatest vogue among the people are either the contentious and quarrelsome, or the showy and empty.... Whence of course the greatest geniuses in all ages have suffered violence, whilst out of regard to their own character they submitted to the judgment of the times, and the populace. And thus when any more sublime speculations happened to appear they were commonly tossed and extinguished by the breath of popular opinion.”

A pathetic confirmation is furnished by Marston who likewise endues the fable of Prometheus with Bacon's (?) sinister interpretation.

Prometheus who celestial fire  
Did steal from Heaven therewith to inspire



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Our earthly bodies with a senseful mind  
Whereby we might the depth of nature find,<sup>1</sup>  
Is ding'd to Hell and vulture eats his heart  
Which did such deep Philosophy impart  
To mortal men.

(*Satyres*) 1598.

O hidden depth of that dread secrecy  
Which I do trembling touch in poetry

But I forget, why sweat I out my brain

1 Compare Bacon's *De Sapientia Veterum*, "Prometheus, or the State of Man" :— "The last particular in the fable is the Games of the Torch, instituted to Prometheus, which again relates to arts and sciences, as well as the invention of fire, for the commemoration and celebration whereof these games were held. And here we have an extremely prudent admonition, directing us to expect the perfection of the sciences from succession, and not from the swiftness and abilities of any single person; for he who is fleetest and strongest in the course may perhaps be less fit to keep his torch alight, since there is danger of its going out from too rapid as well as from too slow a motion. But this kind of contest, with the torch, seems to have been long dropped and neglected; the sciences appearing to have flourished principally in their first authors, as Aristotle, Galen, Euclid, Ptolemy, etc., while their successors have done very little, or scarce made any attempts. But it were highly to be wished that these games might be renewed, to the honour of Prometheus, or human nature, and that they might excite contest, emulation, and laudable endeavours, and the design meet with such success as not to hang tottering, tremulous, and hazarded, upon the torch of any single person. Mankind, therefore, should be admonished to rouse themselves, and try and exert their own strength and chance, and not place all their dependence upon a few men, whose abilities and capacities, perhaps, are not greater than their own. These are the particulars which appear to us shadowed out by this trite and vulgar fable, though without denying that there may be contained in it several intimations that have a surprising correspondence with the Christian mysteries. In particular, the voyage of Hercules, made in a pitcher, to release Prometheus, bears an allusion to the word of God, coming in the frail vessel of the flesh to redeem mankind. But we indulge ourselves no such liberties as these, for fear of using strange fire at the altar of the Lord."

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In deep designs to gay boys, lewd and vain.  
These notes were better sung 'mong better sort,  
But to my pamphlets few save fools resort.

(*Scourge of Villainy*) 1599.

With respect to these passages and the dates of their publication it is not easy to say whether the writers anticipated the unconscious Bacon, or whether he surreptitiously lighted his great torch at their rush lights. Before, however, charging him with malappropriation, the statement in Rawley's *Life* should be considered.

"He was no dashing man as some men are; but ever a countenancer and fosterer of another mans parts. Neither was he one that would appropriate the speech wholly to himself or delight to outvie others.... he contemned no mans observations but would light his torch at every mans candle."

The memorial to Shakespeare, which at the time of writing is in contemplation, might appropriately in one of its forms take the shape of a statue of Orpheus and his Lute, inscribed as at Gorhambury PHILOSOPHY PERSONIFIED.

To how great or how little an extent the Elizabethan drama is indebted to the classics is beyond my province and capabilities to enquire. Eventually it will, however, I think, be shewn to enshrine nearly all the wisdom and beauty of the ancients. A large proportion is notoriously founded upon classical models. Gervinus notes that Lyly's *Mother Bombie*, a "purely popular farce," is designed in the purest style of Terence. *Galatea* is "a Greek legend transported into Lincolnshire." In *Campaspe* "all the witty anecdotes and sallies which antiquity heaped upon Alexander and

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Diogenes are put together as in a mosaic, but with a perfectly modern ease, lightness, and perspicuity of language." <sup>1</sup>

In the ephemeral "potboilers" of the Elizabethan actors we moderns inherit the literary cream of insolent Greece and haughty Rome ; a knowledge which has now become so incorporate with our thoughts and language that the question is arising whether the study — at any rate of Greek, is still essential to the equipment of a modern scholar.

I have before me the prospectus of a projected work by W. Theobald entitled *The Classical Element in the Shakespeare Plays*. Therein the author claims the acquaintance of the provincial and self-educated Shakespeare with the following sources : —

Abstemius. Ælian. Æschylus. Æsop. Agard. Alanus. Anacreon. Anaxandrides. Anthologia Græca. Apollonius Rhodius. Appianus. Apuleius. Aristophanes. Aristotle. Artemidorus. Athenæus. Augustine. Aurelius. Ausonius. Avianus. Avienus. Bacon. Bede. Beza. Bion. Boethius. Buchanan. Cæsar. Caius. Callimachus. Callistratus. Calpurnius. Camararius. Carcinus. Catullus. Cebes. Cicero. Claudian. Copus. Curtus. Dares. Democrates. Democritus. Dictys. Dionysius. Empedocles. Ennius. Erasmus. Euclid. Euripides. V. Flaccus. Florus. Fracastorius. Galileo. Gellius. Gesner. Giovanni da Genova, Gregorius. Gualtier. Heraclitus. Hermes. Herodotus. Hesiod. Hippocrates. Homer. Horace. Horus Apollo.

<sup>1</sup> *Commentaries*, p. 62.

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Isidorus. Juvenal. Lilly. Livy. Lucan. Lucian. Lucretius. Mandeville. Mantuanus. Martial. Menander. Moschus. Muretus. Musæus. Orpheus. Ovid. Palingenius. Paracelsus. Parmenides. Persius. Petronius. Phædrus. Philemon. Philonides. Philostratus. Pindar. Plato. Plautus. Pliny. Plutarch. Pomponius. Posidippus. Priscianus. Propertius. Ptolomæus. Sallust. Saxo. Scaliger. Seneca. Silius Italicus. Sophocles. Statius. Strada. Stradanus. Suetonius. Syrus. Tacitus. Terence. Theocritus. Theognis. Tibullus. Tyrtæus. Valerius. Vanini. Varro. Vasari. Velleius. Virgil. Walsingham. Zeno. Bandello. Berni. Caxton. "Hitopadesa." Holinshed. R. Johnson. Josephus. J. Lilly. "Mahabharata." Montaigne. Enguerrande de Monstrelet. Benoit de Sainte More. Hurtado de Mendoza. Pigafetta. Rabelais. Saadi. Ramus. Sidney. Topsell.

Even *The Epistle Dedicatorie* of the First Folio purporting to have been written by Shakespeare's fellow actors John Heminge and Henry Condell now proves to be to a large extent a mere transcript of Pliny's dedication of his *Natural History*.

I conclude the present chapter by some groups of passages which will serve still further to display the intellectual kinship between dramatists and philosophers, and their common acquaintance with classical literature.

### *LAWS A COBWEB.*

Great men like great flies through Laws cobwebs break.

WEBSTER (*Sir T. Wyatt*) 1607.

You must hang up the laws like cobwebs in

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old rooms through which great flies break through,  
the less being caught by the wing.

DEKKER (*If this be not a good play the devil is in it*)  
[1612.]

One of the Seven was wont to say that  
laws were like cobwebs where the small flies  
were caught and the great break through.

BACON (*Apophthegms.*)

### THE BODY A PRISON.

Some say that the body is the grave of  
the Soul which may be thought to be buried  
in our present life.... the body is an enclos-  
ure, or prison, in which the soul is incarcerated.

PLATO (*Cratylus*) translated by Professor  
[Jowett, 1892.]

The body is the prison of the soul.

LYLY (*Endymion* I. 2.) 1591.

Did'st thou ever see a lark in a cage?  
Such is the soul in the body.

WEBSTER (*Malfi* IV. 2.) 1616-1623.

He the flitted life does win unto her native  
prison to return.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* I. 7. 70.) 1590-1609.

Fearing lest from her cage the weary soul  
would flit.

IBID (*Ibid* III. II.)

Life being weary of these worldly bars.

SHAKESPEARE (*Julius Cæsar* I. 3.) 1623.

(*Enter Constance.*)

Look who comes here! A grave unto a soul  
Holding the eternal spirit against her will  
In the vile prison of afflicted breath.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John* III. 4.) 1623.

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The spiraculum, or inspired essence..., the *substance* of the soul.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning* iv. 3.) 1605.  
When this eternal *substance* of my soul  
Did live imprisoned in my wanton flesh.

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy*) 1594-1602.  
That immortal spirit and incorruptible *sub-*  
*stance* of my soul may be obscure and sleep  
awhile within this house of flesh.

SIR T. BROWNE (*Religio Medici*) 1635-1643.  
This hollow prison of my flesh.

SHAKESPEARE (*Titus Andronicus* III. 2.) 1594.  
Let him come thrill his partisan  
Against this breast that thro a large wide wound  
My mighty soul might rush out of this prison  
To fly more freely to yon crystal palace  
Where honour sits enthroned.

WEBSTER (*Appius and Virginia* iv. 2.) 1654.  
Whose weapons have made passage for my soul  
That breaks from out the prison of my breast.

PEELE (*Alcazar* v.) 1594.  
My soul .... this lump of clay her prison.

MASSINGER (*Believe as You List* iv. 2.) 1631.)  
Think with how much unwillingness and anguish  
A glorified soul parted from the body  
Would to that loathsome jail again return.<sup>1</sup>

MIDDLETON (*Mayor of Quinborough* I) 1661.  
**SENSE-MOTION.**

In the 1604 quarto of *Hamlet* there occur  
the lines,

*Sense*, sure you have  
Else could you not have *motion*.

<sup>1</sup> These views were very contrary to the theology of the  
time, and even of current creeds.

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As Mr Edwin Reed points out, the commentators can make nothing of these words. "One of them suggests that for 'motion' we substitute *notion* ; another, *emotion*. Others still contend that the misprint is in the first part of the sentence ; that 'sense' must be understood to mean *sensation* or *sensibility*. Dr Ingleby is certain that Hamlet refers to the Queen's wanton impulse. The difficulty is complicated, too, by the fact that the lines were omitted from the revised version of the play in the folio of 1623, concerning which, however, the most daring commentator has not ventured to offer a remark. But in Bacon's prose works we find not only an explanation of the passage in the quarto, but also the reason why it was excluded from the folio. The *Advancement of Learning* was published in 1605, one year after the quarto of *Hamlet* containing the sentence in question appeared ; but no repudiation of the old doctrine, that everything that has motion must have sense, is found in it. Indeed, Bacon seems to have had at that time a lingering opinion that the doctrine is true, even as applied to the planets, in the influence which these wanderers were then supposed to exert over the affairs of men. But in 1623 he published a new edition of the *Advancement* in Latin, under the title of *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, and therein expressly declared that the doctrine is untrue ; that there can be motion in inanimate bodies without sense, but with what he called a kind of perception. He said :

'Ignorance on this point drove some of the ancient philosophers to suppose that a soul is infused into all bodies without distinction ; for

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they could not conceive how there can be motion without sense, or sense without a soul.'

"The Shake-speare folio with its revised version of *Hamlet* came out in the same year (1623); and the passage in question, having run through all previous editions of the play, — *i. e.*, in 1604, in 1605, in 1611, and in the undated quarto, — but now no longer harmonizing with the author's views, dropped out."

Prior to 1623 I find two other dramatic references to this subject.

No breath, no *sense*, no *motion* in them.

MARLOWE (*Tamburlaine* Pt I. v. 2.) 1590.

This serpents counsel... mounts to my brain and binds my prince of *sense*, my voluntary *motion*, and my life.

CHAPMAN (*Blind Beggar*) 1598.

Subsequent to 1623, the following:—

I can see nothing without sense and motion.

RANDOLPH (*Muses Looking Glass* II 3.) 1638.

Thou continual *motion*, cease, a pox upon thee!  
(*striking him*)

Hold, hold, my lord, I am *sensible*!

SHIRLEY (*The Traitor*) III. I.) 1631.

Sorrow makes him *insensible*. Ha! there's no *motion* left in his vital spirits.

CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* IV. I.) 1654.

To die, and as I were *insensible* believe I had no *motion*.

MASSINGER (*Maid of Honour* IV. 4.) 1628-1632.

### WRIT IN WATER

*Dicit : sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti*

*In vento, et rapida scribere oportet aqua.*

CATULLUS (*Carm.* LXX.)



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Men's evil manners live in brass, their virtues we write in water.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry VIII.* IV. 2.) 1623.

{ Injuries are writ in brass.

MASSINGER (*Duke of Milan* v. 1.) 1623.

{ Benefits in sand or water.

IBID (*Maid of Honour* v. 2.) 1628-1632.

Who then to frail mortality shall trust  
But limns the water, or but writes in dust.

BACON (1625-1629.)

Favours are writ in dust, but stripes... in lasting steel.

MARSTON (*Malcontent* II. 3.) 1604.

Your better deeds shall be in water writ,  
but this [*evil*] in marble.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster* v. 3.)

1613-1620.

Words writ in water have more lasting essence.

CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* v. 3.) 1654.

### OCEAN CANNOT CLEANSE

Not the wide Danubes waves

Nor Phasis stream can wash away this stain.

SOPHOCLES (*Ædipus Tyrannus*, trans. by

Edwin Reed.)

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No.

SHAKESPEARE (*Macbeth* II. 2.) 1623.

Not all the showers of rain

The heavy clouds send down can wash away

The foul unmanly guilt the world will lay

Upon thee.

FLETCHER (*Faithful Shepherdess* IV. 1.) 1610.

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Not all the clouds  
(The skies large canopy) could they drown  
[the seas  
With perpetual inundation  
Can wash it ever out. Leave me I pray. (*falls*  
[down])

ROWLEY (*All's Lost by Lust*) 1633.

But could I make an ocean with my tears

The sea wants water enough to wash away  
The foulness of my name.

TOURNEUR (*Atheist's Tragedy* IV. 5) 1611.

O what vast ocean of repentant tears can  
cleanse my breast from the polluting filth of  
ulcerous sinne?

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* IV. 3.) 1602.

### BRASS-BOUND BREAST

*Illi robur et aes triplex  
Circa pectus erat, qui fragilem truci  
Commisit pelago ratem  
Primus.*

HORACE (*Odes* I. 3, 9.)

And 't were not hooped with steel my breast  
would break.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* V. 5) 1602.

If my heart were not hooped with adamant  
the conceit of this would have burst it.

CHAPMAN (*Bussy d'Ambois* III. 1.) 1607.

Had need have their breasts hoop't with  
adamant.

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* V. 2.) 1616-1623.

Now patience hoop my sides with steeled  
ribs lest I do burst my breast.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* IV. 2. pt 2.) 1602.

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As if this flesh, which walls about our life,  
were brass impregnable.

SHAKESPEARE (*Richard III.* III. 2.) 1597.

Wil't thou not break heart?

Are these my ribs wrought out of brass or  
steel?

HEYWOOD (*Fair Maid of the West* III. 4.)

1617-1631.

Or be his breast hoop't with ribs of brasse.

IBID (*Silver Age*) 1613.

### SECOND SELF

It was a sparing speech of the ancients to  
say "that a friend is another himself," for  
that a friend is far more than himself... A  
man hath a body, and that body is confined  
to a place; but where friendship is, all offices  
of life are, as it were, granted to him and his  
deputy; for he may exercise them by his friend.

BACON (*Essay : Friendship*) 1625.

What are friends but one mind in two bodies.

KYD (*Solyman and Perseda* IV. 1.) 1599.

Whither in such haste my second self?...

My other soul, my bosom, my hearts friend  
O my Andrea!

ANON (*Jeronimo* I. 2.) 1588-1605.

My other self, my counsels consistory,

My oracle, my prophet, my dear cousin!

SHAKESPEARE (*Richard III* II. 2.) 1597.

My second self, Francisco!

MASSINGER (*Duke of Milan* III. 3.) 1623.

Strotzo! my other soul, my life!

MARSTON (*Antonio & Mellida* pt. II. Act. 5.)

1602.

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### COMPOSITE BEAUTY

She is most beautiful of all having stolen all graces from all others.

CATULLUS (Epigram 87. trans. Ed. Reed)

The Chian painter, when he was required  
To portrait Venus in her perfect hue,  
To make his work more absolute desired  
Of all the fairest maids to have the view,  
Much more one needs to draw the semblant true  
Of Beauty's queen, the world's sole *wonderment*,  
To sharp my sense with sundry beauty's view,  
And steal from each some part of ornament.

SPENSER (INTRO: to *Fairy Queen*) 1590.

Oh you *wonder* !

No wonder, Sir, but certainly a maid.

You so perfect and so peerless are created  
Of every creatures best.

SHAKESPEARE (*Tempest* I. 2.) 1623.

Though you borrow  
From every country of the Earth the best  
Of those perfections which the climate yields  
To help to make her up ; if put in balance  
This will weigh down the scale.

You talk of *wonders* !

She is indeed a *wonder* and so kept ;  
And, as the world deserved not to behold  
What curious Nature made without a pattern  
Whose copy she hath lost.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Spanish Curate*<sup>1</sup> I. I.)

[1622-1647.]

<sup>1</sup> *The Spanish Curate* was acted "at Court" in 1622 but unpublished until 1647. The passage from *The Tempest* leads to the inference that Shakespeare was present at that Court performance.

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By taking the best parts out of diverse  
faces to make one excellent.

BACON (*Essay: Beauty*) 1607-12.

Beware how in making the portraiture thou  
brest the pattern.

BACON (*Essay: Goodness*) 1607-12.

Were there an *abstract* made  
Of all the eminent and canonised beauties  
By truth recorded or by poets famed.

MASSINGER (*Bashful Lover* IV. I.) 1636-1655.

This rare piece finished,  
Nature despairing e'er to make the like  
Brake suddenly the mould in which  
T'was fashioned.

IBID (*Parliament of Love* V. I.) 1624-1805.

This little *abstract* [Prince Arthur] doth contain  
[that large  
Which died in Geoffry, and the hand of Time  
Shall draw this *brief* into as huge a volume.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John* II. I.) 1623.

One.... whose body is an *abstract* or a *brief*  
Contains each general virtue in the world.

ANON (*Edward III.* II. I.) 1596.

In whose sweet person is comprised the sum  
Of Natures skill and heavenly majesty.

ANON (*Taming of a Shrew*) 1594.

What a piece of work is man! how noble  
in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form  
and moving how express and admirable! in  
action how like an angel! in apprehension  
how like a god! the beauty of the world!  
the paragon of animals!

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet* II. 2.) 1603.

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Man, the *abstract* of all perfection  
Which the workmanship of Heaven hath modelled.  
FORD (*Lovers Melancholy* iv. 1.) 1629.

That I may clip [embrace] the rarest model  
of creation!

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* III. 3.) 1613.

We are informed by Rawley that at the age of sixteen, while yet at Cambridge, Bacon "fell into a dislike of the philosophy of Aristotle: not for the worthlessness of the author to whom he would ever ascribe all high attributes; but for the unfruitfulness of the way; being a philosophy (as his Lordship used to say) only strong for disputations and contentions but barren in the production of Works for the benefit of the life of man. In which mind he continued to his dying day."

In this revolt against Authority and the universal teaching of his age Bacon was supported by the dramatists. Speaking of Shakespeare, Victor Hugo says, he "respects nothing, he goes straight on..... he strides over proprieties; he *overthrows Aristotle.*"<sup>1</sup> In 1604 the anonymous author of *Faustus* (subsequently attributed to Christopher Marlowe, who died in 1593) wrote questioningly:—

And live and die in Aristotle's works  
Sweet *Analytics* 'tis thou hast ravish'd me  
*Bene disserere est finis logices.*  
Is to dispute well, logics chiefest end?  
Affords this art no greater miracle?  
Then read no more.

(Scene I.)

1 *William Shakespeare*. Ch. v.

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In 1593, we find the destitute young tavern haunter, George Peele, similarly throwing off the yoke of orthodoxy.

Leaving our schoolmen's vulgar trodden paths  
And *following the ancient* reverend steps  
Of Trismegistus and Pythagoras  
Through *uncouth ways* and *inaccessible*  
Dost pass into the spacious pleasant fields  
Of Divine Science and Philosophy  
From whence beholding the deformities  
Of common errors and worlds vanity  
Dost here enjoy that sacred sweet content  
That baser souls, not knowing, not affect.

(DEDI : *Order of the Garter.*) 1593.

Had the *Novum Organum* and *Advancement of Learning* been published at that time it might have been inferred that Peele had been inspired to his quest by the following passages.

I, *going the same road as the ancients*, have something better to produce... my object being to *open a new way* for the understanding a way by them *untried* and *unknown*.

BACON (PREFACE : *Novum Organum*) 1620.

The two ways of contemplation are not unlike the two ways of action commonly spoken of by the ancients the one plain and smooth in the beginning and in the end impassable ; the other rough and troublesome in the entrance but after a while fair and even.

IBID (*Advancement of Learning* I. 3.) 1605.

It would be too lengthy a task, and one for which I am unfitted, to show how, like a flock of sheep, the dramatists broke from the preserve of Aristotle and strayed into the inaccessible bye-

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paths of Pythagoras, Hermes Trismegistus, and the Cabalists. Their allusions are not the superficial spanglings of dilettanti, but reveal a ripe and intimate knowledge.

Robert Greene was well acquainted with the Mystics, referring to "the Cabalists, Hermes, Melchie, and Pythagoras." <sup>1</sup> "What," asks Shakespeare, "was the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?" <sup>2</sup>

Pythagoras holds opinion that a witch turns to a wild cat.

CHAPMAN (*May Day* III. 3.) 1611.

Ah, Pythagoras metempsychosis! were that true  
This soul should fly from me and I be changed  
Unto some brutish beast.

MARLOWE (*Faustus*) 1604.

Thy soul!—

O thy opinion old Pythagoras!  
Whither O whither should thy black soul fly?

WEBSTER (*Appius & Virginia* IV. 1.) 1654.

If Pythagorean axioms be true  
Of spirits transmigration.

MARSTON (II *Antonio and Mellida*  
III. 3.) 1602.

Thou imitatest subtle Pythagoras.

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1600.

Kings' looks make Pythagoreans.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Double Marriage*  
III. 1.) 1619-1647.

Although the dramatists were deeply imbued by the philosophy of Pythagoras it will be noticed

<sup>1</sup> *Friar Bacon*, 1594.

<sup>2</sup> *Twelfth Night*, 1623.



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that they regard the theory of reincarnation with half credulous suspicion. The anonymous author of *True Trojans* seems to have expressed their joint opinion on this subject.

That souls immortal are I easily grant  
Their future state distinguished, joy or pain,  
According to the merits of this life.  
But then I rather think, being free from prison  
And bodily contagion, they subsist  
In places fit for immaterial spirits :  
Are not transferred from men to beasts, from  
[beasts  
To men again ; wheeled round by change.  
(II. 3.) 1633.

As specimens of the currency of Pythagorean philosophy I may cite two typical examples, *Cor ne edite* and the *Music of the Spheres*. With regard to the former the employment of the word "corsive," (or corrosive), is commented upon by Professor Boas in his notes upon the works of Kyd as "being *seldom used* in this metaphorical sense." The metaphor is undoubtedly a peculiar one but it was not monopolised by Kyd.

### COR NE EDITE

Cor ne edite, eat not the heart. <sup>1</sup>

BACON (Promus MS.) 1594-6. first printed  
in 1883.

The parable of Pythagoras is dark but true,  
*cor ne edite*. Eat not the heart.

IBID (*Essay : Friendship*) 1625.

I From Plutarch. *De Educ. Puer.* XVIII.

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Unrip the thoughts that harbour in thy breast  
And eat thee up . . . . .  
A corsive to his heart.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

A corsive to his heart.

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* I. 2.) 1594.

A corsive to his griping heart.

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* I. 1.) 1613.

A corsive to our miseries.

ANON (*Lochrine* III. 6.) 1595.

That same bitter corsive which did eat his  
tender heart.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* IV. 9.) 1590-1609.

With *cureless care* consume the heart.

IBID (*Ibid* III. 10.)

*Care* is no *cure* but rather corrosive.

SHAKESPEARE (1 *Henry VI.* III. 3.) 1623.

The greatest corrosive a king can have.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Double Marriage*  
III. 1.) 1619-1647.

### THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

The Pythagoreans held that the Heavenly bodies were separated from each other by intervals corresponding to the harmonic lengths of strings, hence that the movement of the spheres gave rise to music.

It is said that the celestial spheres dance to Apollos lyre.

JOHN DAY (*Humour out of Breath* I. 1.) 1608.

There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest  
But in his motion like an angel sings  
Still quiring to the young eyed cherubim.

SHAKESPEARE (*Merchant of Venice* V. 1.) 1600.

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The spheres make music to the citizens in Heaven.

FORD (*'Tis Pity she's a Whore* II. 5.) 1633.

Choice celestial music equal to the motion of the spheres.

DEKKER & MASSINGER (*Virgin Martyr* v. 2.)  
1622.

May our sweet affections, like the spheres, be still in motion.... and make the like soft music.

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* I. 1.) 1623.

The spheres ne'er danced unto a better tune.

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* II. 2.) 1613.

The music of the spheres sounds not more sweet.

DEKKER & MIDDLETON (*Roaring Girl* IV. 2.) 1611.

Let your tunes you sweet-voiced spheres o'ertake him.

DEKKER & FORD (*Sun's Darling* I. 1.) 1624-1656.

The music of the spheres attending on us.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Prophetess* II. 1.)  
[1622-1647.]

The harmony.... caused by the motion of the seven planets.

BACON (*De Augmentis*) 1622.

In his introduction to the works of Chapman Mr W. L. Phelps after alluding to this poet's contempt for Logic and Philosophy [of Aristotle?] informs us that, "The method of teaching Metaphysics at that time was almost sure to arouse repugnance, if not rebellion, in any mind endowed with originality or common sense. So Chapman, who is certainly the most metaphysical of all Elizabethan dramatists *must have cultivated*

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*that part of his nature with little help from the University curriculum.*" The italics are mine. If Metaphysics found no home at the Universities it is difficult to know whence the dramatists imbibed their abstruse knowledge. It is hardly possible that their unlettered auditors could, in what Ben Jonson termed "these jig given times," have understood them. Marston intimates that few, if any, receptive or appreciative minds existed.

Why sweat I out my brain  
In deep designs to gay boys lewd and vain ?  
These notes were better sung 'mong better sort  
But to my pamphlets few save fools resort.

(*Scourge of Villainy*) 1599.

This accords with the low estimate of a writer in *The Library*<sup>1</sup> who conjectures that "the average edition of even the most popular book of the 16th century must have been only five or six hundred copies, if so much." A populace does not inhale erudition from the air, nor is it convincing to be told that they "absorbed it at every pore" yet, this seemingly is what happened. Even as late as 1697 "the only library in London which approached the nature of a public library was that of Sion College, belonging to the London clergy."<sup>2</sup> The Bodleian at Oxford opened in 1602 was practically the first public library of the kind in Europe. To account for the erudition of William Shakespeare, Professor Anders suggests that this poet was an assiduous reader—not a purchaser—at booksellers' shops. It is, however, highly unlikely that book-

1 No 9.

2 See Buckle's *History of Civilisation*. Ch. VII.

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sellers were accustomed to throw open their treasures to be pawed over by play actors.

Eventually it will, I think, be proved that Henslowe's dramatic hacks were, almost without exception, well-read classical scholars : in comparison with the melancholy condition of learning at the Universities their knowledge must have been profound.

In a work entitled, *Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* ("B. J.") Paris, 1671, I have met with the following reference to Bacon : "*Pythagore faisait une religion du secret. Le Chancelier Bacon que j'estime guère moins que Pythagore le compte entre les mystères les plus saints de sorte que selon la morale de ces deux grands hommes on ne peut révéler un secret sans commettre en même temps une espèce de sacrilège.*"

I am not familiar with any passage in the works of Bacon wherein secresy is thus extolled, and it would be interesting to know upon what foundation "B. J." based his statement. Pythagoras seems certainly in many respects to have been a prototype of Bacon. His system, contrary to the general feeling, was to foster knowledge and form a ruling aristocracy of intellectuals. His disciples, travelling here, there, and everywhere, possessed mysterious modes of intercommunication with far distant students. As a result of the lessons of religion, morality and obedience which they inculcated upon the common people, we are told that a Golden Age in which power was united with wisdom seemed to have set in upon the Earth. That this was the consummation sought by our great English Advancer of Learning is so obvious as to need no

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emphasis. If it be proved—as I strongly suspect it will—that “the broad browed Verulam” followed in the footsteps of Pythagoras, it accords, in this respect, with the practice imputed by Gabriel Harvey to Spenser of “vowed and long experimented secrecy.”

The abundance of borrowings from Antiquity, and the apparent appreciation of them by the lower orders, seems to argue a wide and universal culture. One cannot however reconcile this false inference with the overwhelming testimony to the contrary. To that which has already been cited,<sup>1</sup> I here add some evidence from *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Burton fully confirms the impression derived from other sources, indeed he draws an even more lurid picture. As translated by Shilleto<sup>2</sup> his words are :—

“As regards us (for we are not free from this fault) the same charge remains, the same accusation, if not a much heavier one, may be brought against us ; for it is through our fault, our carelessness, our avarice, that there are such frequent and foul traffickings in the Church (the Temple is put up for sale, and even God himself), such corruptions prevalent, such impiety and wickedness rampant, such a mad Euripus of miseries, such an estuary of troubles ; all this is, I say, owing to the fault of all of us, but especially us University-bred men. For we are the main cause why the State is oppressed with so many evils ; we of our own selves introduce this sad state of affairs, though deserving meantime any scorn and misery for not counteracting

<sup>1</sup> (See ante pp. 33-36).

<sup>2</sup> Part 1. Sect. II. Mem. III. Subs. xv.

## CLASSICISMS

it to the best of our abilities. For what do we expect can happen, when every day pell-mell poor sons of Alma Mater, sprung from the soil, mannikins of no rank whatever, are eagerly admitted to degrees? And if these have learnt by heart one or two definitions and distinctions, and spent the usual number of years in chopping logic, it matters not to what profit, whatever kind of fellows they eventually turn out to be, idiots, triflers, gamesters, tipplers, worthless slaves to lust and pleasure,

‘Such as the suitors of Penelope,  
Or worthless courtiers of Alcinous.’

Provided they have spent so many years at the University, and passed muster as gownsmen, they are presented for lucre’s sake, and through the interest of their friends: I may add often with splendid testimonials to their morals and learning; and on leaving College they are furnished with these, written most amply in their favour, by those who undoubtedly thereby abandon good faith and lose credit. For Doctors and Professors (as one says) care for this only, that from their various professions, irregular more frequently than legitimate ones, they may promote their own interests, and make their gains at the cost of the public. The only thing our annual officials generally desire is that they may squeeze money from the number of those who take degrees, nor do they much care what manner of men they are, whether literate or illiterate, provided they are fat, and sleek, and handsome, and, to sum up in one word, monied. Philosophasters who have no art become Masters of Arts: and the authorities bid those be wise

## CLASSICISMS

who are endowed with no wisdom, and bring nothing to their degree but the desire to take it. Theologasters, sufficiently and more than sufficiently learned if they but pay the fees, emerge full-blown B. D. 's and D. D. 's. And hence it happens that such sorry buffoons everywhere, so many idiots, placed in the twilight of letters, ghosts of pastors, itinerant quacks, stupids, dolts, clods, asses, mere animals, burst with unwashed feet into the sacred precincts of Theology, bringing nothing but a brazen countenance, some vulgar trash, and scholastic trifles hardly worth hearing on the high roads. This is that unworthy and half-starved class of men, indigent, vagabond, slaves to their belly, that ought to be sent back to the plough-tail, fitter for sties than altars, who basely prostitute our Divinity."

After admitting that the Church of England and the English Universities shew many fine examples, better probably than in any European country, Burton continues :—

"No one has so blind a mind as not to see, no one so dull an intelligence as not to perceive, no one so obstinate a judgement, as to refuse to realise that sacred Theology is polluted by idiots and mountebanks, and the heavenly Muses prostituted as some common thing.... Hence that Academic squalor, 'that sadness of the Muses in these days,' since any mannikin ignorant of arts rises.... But I will not dwell on this sad theme any longer. Hence come our tears, hence is it that the Muses are in mourning, hence is it that Religion itself, to use the words of Sesellius, is brought into



## CLASSICISMS

ridicule and contempt, and the Priesthood is debased ; and, since this is the case, I may venture to say so, and to quote the low saying of a low person about the Clergy, that they are a low lot, poor, ignorant, sordid, melancholy, wretched, despicable, and contemptible ! ”

## CHAPTER X

### THE WORDMAKERS

It is impossible to study the Elizabethan Drama without being impressed by the Protean versatility of its authors. In swift and dizzying rotation their poetic souls seem to have been metamorphosed into those of Physicians, Divines, Musicians, Courtiers, Botanists, Kings, Scientists, Philosophers, Lawyers and Philologers. They themselves clearly realised their Protean characteristics and references to the fable are frequent.

I have as many shapes as Proteus had.

ANON (*Sir John Oldcastle* I. 2.) 1599-1600.

I can add colours to the chameleon  
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages.

SHAKESPEARE (3 *Henry VI.* III. 2.) 1592.

I have such strange varieties of colours  
Such shifts of shapes ; blue Proteus sure begot me  
On a chameleon.

RANDOLPH (*Muses Looking Glass* IV. 5) 1638.

Proteus ever changed shapes until he was  
straitened and held fast.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

He then devised himself how to disguise,  
For by his mighty science he could take

## THE WORDMAKERS

As many forms and shapes in seeming wise  
As ever Proteus to himself could make.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* I. II. X.) 1590-1609.

He wandered in the world in strange array....  
Disguised in thousand shapes that none might  
[him bewray.  
IBID (III. 6.)

I will play the changeling,  
I'll change myself into a thousand shapes  
To court our brave spectators ; I'll change my  
[postures  
Into a thousand different variations  
To draw even ladies eyes to follow mine.  
I'll change my voice into a thousand tones  
To chain attention : not a changeling, father ?  
None but myself shall play the changeling.

ROWLEY & MIDDLETON (*Spanish Gypsy*  
II. I.) 1653.

Oh the miserable  
Condition of a prince who, though he vary  
More shapes than Proteus in his mind and  
[manners,  
He cannot win an universal suffrage  
From the many headed monster multitude.

MASSINGER (*Emperor of the East* II. I.)  
1631-1632.

It is in the rôle of philologers that the poets  
now claim attention.

At the time immediately prior to the advent  
of the dramatists the English language was a  
slighted, poor, inexpressive and unseemly thing.  
In the Elizabethan era there was a marked and  
successful movement for its augmentation and  
amendment.

## THE WORDMAKERS

Englishmen had at that period to pick up their mother tongue as best they could. "The first English Grammar was not published until 1586. Little, if any, English was taught even in the lower classes of the Grammar schools, and this fact accounts for the wonderful varieties in spelling proper names common to the period. When there is scarcity of writing and printing language is unsettled and variable."<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, describing an English county gentleman of William III's time, observes: "His language and pronunciation were such as we should now expect to have only from the most ignorant clowns. His oaths, coarse jests and scurrilous terms of abuse were uttered with the broadest accent of his province."

One hundred years earlier, when language was even more unformed, the surrounding speech must have struck the ear almost as strangely as a foreign tongue. It is stated that the dialects of the different shires were so marked that the militia were unable to comprehend their orders unless given by an officer from their own district.

In Mrs Everett Green's *Letters of Illustrious Ladies* there is quoted an epistle from Elizabeth, Duchess of Norfolk, to her brother Lord Stafford. It runs:—

"Brorder I pra you to ssand me my ness dorety by kass I kno har kon dessess se sal not lake hass I leffe and he wold be hord by me at hor haless I kyng he be hone kyne tha ffaless drab and kouk and nat ben I hade hadehar to my couffert."

<sup>1</sup> Goadby. *The England of Shakespeare*. p. 101.

## THE WORDMAKERS

Mrs Green appends the following key as the best rendering she can offer :—

“Brother, I pray you to send me my niece Dorothy, because I know her conditions— she shall not lack as long as I live, an you would be heard by me at (all), or else I think you be own kin to the false drab and cook : had it not been I had had her to my comfort.”<sup>1</sup>

This is perhaps an extreme instance, but there is little doubt that the spelling, pronunciation and grammar of the Elizabethan gentry were very uncouth. The speech of the illiterate lower orders must have been many degrees more rude and barbarous ; reading and writing being accomplishments beyond their ken.

It has been shewn that the playhouse habitués were almost, if not entirely, vagrant persons, masterless men, thieves, horsestealers, whoremongers, cozeners, coneycatchers, contrivers of treason and other idle and dangerous persons.<sup>2</sup> In *The Roaring Girl* Middleton has preserved a specimen of their discordant jargon.

*Trapdoor.* Ben mort, shall you and I heave a bough, mill a ken, or nip a bung, and then we'll couch a hogshead under the ruffmans, and there you shall wap with me, and I'll niggle with you.

*Moll.* Out, you damned impudent rascal !

*Trap.* Cut benar whids, and hold your fambles and your stamps.

*L. Noland.* Nay, nay, Moll, why art thou angry ? what was his gibberish ?

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from *Social England*. Vol. 11, pp. 244-246.

<sup>2</sup> See ante p. 4.

## THE WORDMAKERS

*Moll.* Marry, this, my lord, says he : " Ben mort, " good wench, " shall you and I heave a bough, mill a ken, or nip a bung ? " shall you and I rob a house or cut a purse ?

*Moll.* Come, you rogue, sing with me.

Song.

*By Moll and Tearcat.*

A gage of ben rom-bouse  
In a bousing ken of Rom-vile,  
Is benar than a caster,  
Peck, pennam, lap, or popler,  
Which we mill in deuse a vile.  
O I wud lib all the lightmans,  
O I wud lib all the darkmans  
By the salomon, under the ruffmans,  
By the salomon, in the hartmans,  
And scour the queer cramp ring,  
And couch till a palliard docked my dell,  
So my bousy nab might skew rom-bouse well.  
Avast to the pad, let us bing ;  
Avast to the pad, let us bing.

*All.* Fine knaves, i'faith !

*J. Dapper.* The grating of ten new cart-wheels, and the gruntling of five hundred hogs coming from Rumford market, cannot make a worse noise than this canting language does in my ears.

Burns coming from the plough uttered his inspirations in the dialect familiar to himself and to his auditors. So also the West Country poet William Barnes, and others too numerous to recite ; but the Elizabethan dramatists, though for the most part *canaille* writing for the pence

## THE WORDMAKERS

and patronage of *canaille*, sang their music in pure and academic English. Just as their princely minds were apparent to each other, so also were the limpid beauties of their speech. "Whence are you sir?" says Greene, "your terms are finer than the common sort of men."<sup>1</sup> "Are you native of this place?" asks Shakespeare, "your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling."<sup>2</sup>

"Note his language" recommends Massinger, "It relishes of better breeding than his present state dares promise."<sup>3</sup>

"Note the difference," repeats Webster, "T'wixt a noble strain, and one bred from the rabble."<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, Ford in *Perkin Warbeck* comments on "the difference between noble natures and the base born."<sup>5</sup>

It is not nowadays a popular and vulgar occurrence for an actor to write a good play, still less is it usual for him to express himself in poetic form. Probably the rascality, on whose favour the Elizabethan playwrights subsisted, would have been as well, if not better pleased by a knock-about farce, or a morrice dance by Kemp. It seems, however, to have been *de rigueur* that the Elizabethan hacks should write in swelling numbers, and spin their drumming decasyllables from their own brains. The pedantic and bombastic coinages of the dramatists are the more inexplicable as Dekker confesses that the heads of "our

1 *Friar Bacon*. 1594.

2 *A. Y. L. I.* 1623.

3 *Bondman* 1623-1624.

4 *Appius and Virginia* 1654.

5 (I. I.) 1654.

## THE WORDMAKERS

audience miserably run a wool gathering if we do but offer to break them with hard words." <sup>1</sup>

The publication now in progress, under the auspices of the Philological Society, of Dr Murray's *New English Dictionary* renders it possible to say with approximate accuracy how much of the English language we owe to the fellowship of brilliant Spirits now under consideration. *The New English Dictionary* is a registry where may be found recorded the birthday and parent, so far as known, of every English word now, or ever, in use. An examination of this work will therefore enable anyone by the Law of Average to arrive at an estimate of the number of words coined in certain periods by certain writers. The analysis of a sequence of 143 pages, (equal to 429 columns,) selected at random yielded so incredible a result that I deemed it desirable to examine further. My first investigation having by chance fallen upon a group of words including the Latin prefix *Ex*, I decided to examine a further sequence of 143 pages which should include the Greek prefix *Ge*. No author coins from a tongue with which he is not sufficiently familiar to *think* in, and Greek being "neglected and despised," I thought it probable that few if any words from this source were likely to have come into being during the Elizabethan era. This reasoning having been partly borne out, it will, I think, be sufficiently approximate to strike an average between the Latin and Greek groups, from which average we can arrive with sufficient accuracy at the probable *total* aggregate. As it will be many

1 (*Kings Entertainment* 1604.)



## THE WORDMAKERS

years before the publication of Dr Murray's great undertaking is completed, it is necessary to be content for the time being with merely a rough total.

On enquiring of Dr Murray, he courteously informed me that the work when finished will occupy between 15,000 and 16,000 folio pages. It will, therefore, be well upon the safe side to assume that each sequence of 143 pages is equivalent to *one per cent* of the complete work. Calculating upon this basis we are indebted to the poet Shakespeare for enriching our English tongue with the astonishing total of 9,450 newly coined or newly used words. Our obligations to other contemporary play-wrights and to the philosophers Francis Bacon and Thomas Browne are as follows :—

BACON . . . . .	1,850
BROWNE. . . . .	2,850
BEAUMONT & FLETCHER. . . . .	975
CHAPMAN . . . . .	1,500
DEKKER . . . . .	350
DAY . . . . .	50
FORD . . . . .	200
GREENE . . . . .	800
HEYWOOD . . . . .	350
JONSON. . . . .	1,350
LODGE . . . . .	100
LYLY . . . . .	350
MARLOWE . . . . .	525
MARSTON . . . . .	650
MASSINGER . . . . .	475
MIDDLETON. . . . .	300
NASH . . . . .	1,350
PEELE . . . . .	150
PORTER. . . . .	100
ROWLEY . . . . .	125
SHIRLEY . . . . .	150
SPENSER . . . . .	1,200
TOURNEUR . . . . .	50
WEBSTER . . . . .	50
	<hr/>
ADD SHAKESPEARE . . . . .	15,850
ANONYMOUS DRAMATISTS . . . . .	9,450
	<hr/>
TOTAL	25,550

## THE WORDMAKERS

“Language,” says Emerson, “is fossil poetry. As the limestone of the Continent consists of infinite masses of the shells of animalcules, so language is made up of images or tropes which now in their secondary use have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin.” Though true of ordinary speech, the language created in the Elizabethan era was essentially not a poetic but a philosophic fabric.

When Milton alluded to Shakespeare “warbling his native woodnotes wild,” he failed to appreciate that the poet’s woodnotes savour rather of the study than the hedgerow. The lists now given exhibit specimens of the coinage of each word-maker. They represent the harvest from two 143 page sequences taken from *The New English Dictionary*, undesignedly from “E,” designedly from “G.” The dates refer to earliest use.

### ANONYMOUS DRAMATISTS

E.	G.
exterior . . . . . 1591	gimmaled . . . . . 1596
extrude . . . . . 1566	gingerbread . . . . . 1605
	girdle. . . . . 1607

Total 2	Total 3
Average of 143 pages =	$2\frac{1}{2}$ : estimated total 250.

### BACON

eviction . . . . . 1626	germinant . . . . . 1605
evitation. . . . . 1626	germinate . . . . . 1626
exact. . . . . 1597	get . . . . . 1626
exaltation . . . . 1607-12	gigantine . . . . . 1605
examinable. . . . . 1605	gill . . . . . 1626
excepting . . . . . 1626	gill <sup>1</sup> . . . . . 1626
excerned . . . . . 1626	glass . . . . . 1625

<sup>1</sup> In cases where the same words appear more than once it means that they have been used with some novel significance.

## THE WORDMAKERS

excursion . . . . . 1626	glasswork . . . . . 1626
exemplar . . . . . 1605	globe . . . . . 1607
exercise . . . . . 1622	glomeration . . . . . 1626
exhilarate . . . . . 1620	go away. . . . . 1579
exhilaration . . . . . 1626	
exhility . . . . . 1626	
expedited . . . . . 1626	
expeditive . . . . . 1617	
expell . . . . . 1626	
expiate . . . . . 1600	
expiration . . . . . 1626	
expound. . . . . 1605	
exquisitely . . . . . 1626	
extimulation . . . . . 1626	
extensive . . . . . 1605	
extollers. . . . . 1626	
extracting . . . . . 1626	
exudation . . . . . 1626	
exulcerate . . . . . 1592	

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Total 26

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Total 11

Average of 143 pages =  $18\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 1850.

### *BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER*

exampled . . . . . 1625	geometry . . . . . 1622
excruciate . . . . . 1615	gerundive . . . . . 1616
executions . . . . . 1618	gibship . . . . . 1616
expires . . . . . 1633	gib . . . . . 1621
explore . . . . . 1616	gimcrack . . . . . 1618
	gin . . . . . 1625
	gillian . . . . . 1618
	girdle. . . . . 1616
	give me myself . . . . . 1616
	give up . . . . . 1625
	gloominess . . . . . 1607
	glowingly . . . . . 1616
	go . . . . . 1611
	goad ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ). . . . . 1619
	glode. . . . . 1621

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Total 5

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Total  $14\frac{1}{2}$

Average of 143 pages =  $9\frac{3}{4}$  : estimated total 975.

## THE WORDMAKERS

### *SIR THOMAS BROWNE*

evocation . . . . .	1646	geography . . . . .	1643
exactly . . . . .	1646	geometrical. . . . .	1682
exactnesse . . . . .	1646	geometrize . . . . .	1658
examinator . . . . .	1646	geoponicall. . . . .	1646
exantlation . . . . .	1646	gestation . . . . .	1646
excited . . . . .	1646	gestatory . . . . .	1682
exclusion . . . . .	1646	gibbous . . . . .	1646
exclusions . . . . .	1646	glaciable . . . . .	1658
excoriable . . . . .	1658	glaciation . . . . .	1646
excuse . . . . .	1643	glaciously . . . . .	1646
excuse . . . . .	1646	glandulosity . . . . .	1646
executive . . . . .	1646	glome . . . . .	1643
exenteration . . . . .	1646	glory . . . . .	1646
exesion . . . . .	1646		
exalement . . . . .	1646		
exhaustion . . . . .	1646		
exhilation . . . . .	1646		
existency . . . . .	1646		
exolution . . . . .	1658		
exordial . . . . .	1682		
exosseous . . . . .	1646		
expansion . . . . .	1646		
expansions . . . . .	1682		
expectible . . . . .	1646		
expectoration . . . . .	1672		
experimentally . . . . .	1646		
expilators . . . . .	1658		
explication . . . . .	1658		
explorement . . . . .	1646		
expresse . . . . .	1646		
expressed . . . . .	1682		
expressions . . . . .	1646		
expurgatory . . . . .	1646		
exsanguious . . . . .	1646		
exstimulate . . . . .	1646		
exsuccous . . . . .	1646		
extances . . . . .	1682		
extemporary . . . . .	1642		
extensive . . . . .	1646		
extinction . . . . .	1646		

## THE WORDMAKERS

extispicious. . . . .	1649
extradictionary . . . .	1646
extraordinaries . . . .	1650
exudate . . . . .	1646

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Total 44

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Total 13

Average of 143 pages =  $28\frac{1}{2}$ : estimated total 2850.

### CHAPMAN

evicts . . . . .	1631	gestion . . . . .	1599
evulsion . . . . .	1611	giantism. . . . .	1639
ewed . . . . .	1611	giddy. . . . .	1615
exciteful . . . . .	1615	gigot . . . . .	1611
exempt . . . . .	1611	give on . . . . .	1611
expansure . . . . .	1606	glaze . . . . .	1605
expect . . . . .	1611		
expectlesse . . . . .	1607		
expenceful . . . . .	1605		
expiscating . . . . .	1611		
expiscation . . . . .	1605		
explode . . . . .	1618		
exploratresse . . . . .	1616		
explore . . . . .	1615		
exposure . . . . .	1611		
expressor . . . . .	1611		
expugnance . . . . .	1611		
expulsive . . . . .	1618		
expulsure . . . . .	1611		
expungers . . . . .	1611		
exquire . . . . .	1607		
exspuate. . . . .	1604		
extol . . . . .	1618		
eyeful . . . . .	1611		

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Total 24

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Total 6

Average of 143 pages = 15: estimated total 1500.

### DAY

. . . . .	gibbet . . . . .	1600
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Average of 143 pages =  $\frac{1}{2}$ : estimated total 50.

## THE WORDMAKERS

### DEKKER

. . . . .	geometric . . . . . 1630 High German ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) . . . . . 1611 gibble gabble . . . . . 1600 globical . . . . . 1612 glove . . . . . 1609 glutinously . . . . . 1620 go down. . . . . 1608 ginnimon ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) . . . . . 1607
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Total 7

Average of 143 pages =  $3\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 350.

### FORD

exercise . . . . . 1628 extinct . . . . . 1606	gewgaw . . . . . 1634 gilet. . . . . 1638
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Total 2

Total 2

Average of 143 pages = 2 : estimated total 200.

### GREENE

example. . . . . 1592 exceed . . . . . 1590 excellence . . . . . 1590 except . . . . . 1592 excrementall . . . . . 1591 exercise . . . . . 1592 exhaled . . . . . 1589 expulsive . . . . . 1592 extemporate . . . . . 1590 extent . . . . . 1594 ?	geomantic . . . . . 1590 gin . . . . . 1592 glance . . . . . 1591 glance . . . . . 1590 glide . . . . . 1590 glorioser. . . . . 1589
---	---

Total 10

Total 6

Average of 143 pages = 8 : estimated total 800.

### HEYWOOD

excell . . . . . 1611 expolish . . . . . 1624 exsuperance . . . . . 1635	germanize . . . . . 1609 get . . . . . 1607
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## THE WORDMAKERS

extermined . . . . 1634  
 extortioning . . . . 1655

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Total 5 Total 2  
 Average of 143 pages =  $3\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 350.

### BEN JONSON

ewe . . . . . 1610	by George . . . . . 1598
exacuate . . . . . 1632	gesticulate . . . . . 1601
exampld . . . . . 1637	gigantomachize . . . . 1599
exemplified. . . . . 1632	glassman . . . . . 1610
exotick . . . . . 1599	gleek . . . . . 1599
explait'st . . . . . 1613	glibly . . . . . 1605
expulsed . . . . . 1603	glidder . . . . . 1616
extempore . . . . . 1637	glut . . . . . 1599
extempore . . . . . 1598	glut . . . . . 1636
extensive . . . . . 1610	gnat . . . . . 1616
extract . . . . . 1630	go . . . . . 1605
extravagant . . . . . 1599	go on . . . . . 1611
eye-bright . . . . . 1610	
eye-shot . . . . . 1599	
eye-strings . . . . . 1601	

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Total 15 Total 12  
 Average of 143 pages =  $13\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 1350.

### LODGE

exhortarie . . . . . 1584	. . . . .
expedite. . . . . 1614	

Average of 143 pages = 1 : estimated total 100.

### LYLY

excantation. . . . . 1580	gesture . . . . . 1579
expyre . . . . . 1579	girder . . . . . 1584
exquisite. . . . . 1579	glass . . . . . 1579
	glimpse . . . . . 1579

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Total 3 Total 4  
 Average of 143 pages =  $3\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 350.

### MARLOWE

excellent. . . . . 1590	get. . . . . 1592
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## THE WORDMAKERS

exclaim . . . . .	1592	go for ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) . . . . .	1594
excruciate . . . . .	1586		
exercise . . . . .	1590		
expiate . . . . .	1594		
expresslesse . . . . .	1586		
expugned . . . . .	1598		
extorting . . . . .	1592		
extracts . . . . .	1590		

Total 9

Total  $1\frac{1}{2}$

Average of 143 pages =  $5\frac{1}{4}$  : estimated total 525.

### MASSINGER

everyday . . . . .	1632	gittern . . . . .	1599
exceedings . . . . .	1629	glibness . . . . .	1631
expeditious . . . . .	1599	go . . . . .	1599
exploded . . . . .	1626	goad ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) . . . . .	1619
expression . . . . .	1624		
extremities . . . . .	1639		

Total 6

Total  $3\frac{1}{2}$

Average of 143 pages =  $4\frac{3}{4}$  : estimated total 475.

### MARSTON

exclamation . . . . .	1602	gilt . . . . .	1598
exist . . . . .	1602	girling . . . . .	1599
extorting . . . . .	1599	give in . . . . .	1602
extracture . . . . .	1602	glib . . . . .	1598
		glib . . . . .	1602
		glib . . . . .	1599
		glibbery . . . . .	1601
		glitter . . . . .	1602
		gloating . . . . .	1602

Total 4

Total 9

Average of 143 pages =  $6\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 650.

### MIDDLETON

. . . . .		High German ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) . . . . .	1611
		gernative . . . . .	1608
		get up . . . . .	1607
		get penny . . . . .	1607



## THE WORDMAKERS

gigantical . . . .	1604
gipsying ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ). . . .	1627
gipsyfy . . . .	1623

Total 6

Average of 143 pages = 3: estimated total 300.

### NASH

evidencer . . . .	1593	geremumble . . . .	1599
eviscerating . . . .	1599	gesture . . . .	1589
excelsitude . . . .	1599	gig . . . .	1590
exceptioning . . . .	1593	gimpanado . . . .	1593
exchange . . . .	1589	gird . . . .	1593
exchequer . . . .	1589	gleamy . . . .	1593
exclamatory . . . .	1593	glib . . . .	1594
excorse . . . .	1593	glory ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ). . . .	1594
excrcuiament . . . .	1599	gnathonically . . . .	1596
exhalations . . . .	1592	go for ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) . . . .	1594
exhaled . . . .	1589	gob . . . .	1599
expired . . . .	1589		
explement . . . .	1593		
extempore . . . .	1593		
extract . . . .	1599		
extraordinarily . . . .	1593		
extrinsical . . . .	1593		

Total 17

Total 10

Average of 143 pages =  $13\frac{1}{2}$ : estimated total 1350.

### PEELE

excusal . . . .	1584	gillyflower . . . .	1584
		gite . . . .	1589

Total 1

Total 2

Average of 143 pages =  $1\frac{1}{2}$ : estimated total 150.

### PORTER

exerate . . . .	1599	. . . .	
eyelet. . . .	1599		

Total 2

Average of 143 pages = 1: estimated total 100.

## THE WORDMAKERS

### ROWLEY

extirp . . . . .	1605	gibbed cat . . . . .	1633
		gipsying ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) . . . . .	1627
Average of 143 pages = $1\frac{1}{4}$ :		estimated total 125.	

### SHAKESPEARE

everyway . . . . .	1601	St George . . . . .	1594
evidence. . . . .	1593	German . . . . .	1602
evils . . . . .	1603	germen . . . . .	1605
evilly. . . . .	1595	gest . . . . .	1611
exact. . . . .	1601	get . . . . .	1591
exacting. . . . .	1603	get . . . . .	1600
exalted . . . . .	1601	get . . . . .	1610
exalted . . . . .	1601	get . . . . .	1596
excellencies . . . . .	1601	get . . . . .	1590
excellent . . . . .	1588	get . . . . .	1596
excellent . . . . .	1604	get aboard . . . . .	1590
except . . . . .	1593	get aboard . . . . .	1611
except . . . . .	1591	get back. . . . .	1605
exception . . . . .	1602	get in. . . . .	1593
exceptlesse. . . . .	1607	get off . . . . .	1607
excesse . . . . .	1596	get on . . . . .	1597
exchange . . . . .	1602	get over. . . . .	1597
exchange . . . . .	1611	ghastly . . . . .	1593
exchange . . . . .	1588	ghost. . . . .	1592
exchange . . . . .	1602	ghost. . . . .	1606
excitements . . . . .	1604	gibber . . . . .	1604
exclaym'd . . . . .	1591	gibbet . . . . .	1597
exclaims. . . . .	1593	giddy. . . . .	1593
excrement . . . . .	1588	gild . . . . .	1595
excuse . . . . .	1590	gild . . . . .	1588
excuse . . . . .	1606	gild . . . . .	1596
execution . . . . .	1588	gild . . . . .	1610
executioner. . . . .	1594	gild . . . . .	1597
exercise . . . . .	1602	gilded . . . . .	1588
exercise . . . . .	1594	gilt . . . . .	1593
exercise . . . . .	1610	gimmer . . . . .	1591
exercise . . . . .	1606	gipsy . . . . .	1600
exhalest . . . . .	1588	gipsy. . . . .	1607
exhale . . . . .	1599	gird . . . . .	1600
exhales . . . . .	1594	girt . . . . .	1593
exhibitors . . . . .	1599	girdle. . . . .	1590

## THE WORDMAKERS

exion . . . . .	1597	give . . . . .	1592
exist . . . . .	1605	give . . . . .	1596
exit . . . . .	1588	give . . . . .	1611
exorcist . . . . .	1601	give . . . . .	1607
expect . . . . .	1601	give . . . . .	1606
expectance . . . . .	1606	give ground . . . . .	1593
expectansie. . . . .	1602	give it . . . . .	1588
expectation. . . . .	1596	give off . . . . .	1595
expedience. . . . .	1593	give off . . . . .	1606
expedience. . . . .	1596	give up . . . . .	1611
expediently. . . . .	1600	give up . . . . .	1604
expedition . . . . .	1599	glance . . . . .	1590
expedition . . . . .	1591	glass . . . . .	1593
expeditious. . . . .	1610	glass . . . . .	1588
expell . . . . .	1602	glasseye . . . . .	1605
expence . . . . .	1588	glaze . . . . .	1593
expence . . . . .	1600	glaze . . . . .	1601
expertnesse . . . . .	1601	gleam. . . . .	1593
expiate . . . . .	1594	gleaned . . . . .	1599
explain . . . . .	1608	gleek . . . . .	1590
expose . . . . .	1611	glib . . . . .	1607
exposure . . . . .	1605	glib . . . . .	1611
expresse. . . . .	1602	glimmer . . . . .	1590
expresse. . . . .	1601	glimpse . . . . .	1602
expresst . . . . .	1596	glooming . . . . .	1592
expressive . . . . .	1601	gloomy . . . . .	1588
expressely . . . . .	1607	glorious . . . . .	1608
expressure . . . . .	1601	glove . . . . .	1597
expressure . . . . .	1598	glow . . . . .	1600
exsufficate . . . . .	1604	gluttonlike . . . . .	1592
extend . . . . .	1601	glutton . . . . .	1600
extended . . . . .	1606	gnarl . . . . .	1593
extent . . . . .	1588	gnarling. . . . .	1597
exteriorly . . . . .	1595	gnarled . . . . .	1603
extern . . . . .	1600	gnawn . . . . .	1598
externall. . . . .	1591	go. . . . .	1593
externall. . . . .	1595	go. . . . .	1588
extincture . . . . .	1597	go. . . . .	1599
extolment . . . . .	1602	go. . . . .	1605
extort. . . . .	1601	go. . . . .	1597
extracting . . . . .	1601	go. . . . .	1592
extravagancy . . . . .	1601	go. . . . .	1607

## THE WORDMAKERS

extravagant. . . . .	1602	go. . . . .	1595
extravagant. . . . .	1588	go. . . . .	1593
extremest . . . . .	1600	go. . . . .	1596
extreme . . . . .	1604	go before . . . . .	1611
extremes . . . . .	1593	go upon. . . . .	1607
extreames . . . . .	1588	go upon. . . . .	1601
eye . . . . .	1590	go without . . . . .	1596
eyes . . . . .	1601	go along. . . . .	1602
eye . . . . .	1602	go down. . . . .	1599
eye . . . . .	1610	go off. . . . .	1606
eye . . . . .	1606	go off. . . . .	1605
eye . . . . .	1592	go round . . . . .	1606
eye . . . . .	1590	go round . . . . .	1603
eye . . . . .	1588	go together. . . . .	1606
eye-glasse . . . . .	1611	go between. . . . .	1598
eyeslesse . . . . .	1592	god . . . . .	1601
eye-wink . . . . .	1598		

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Total 95

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Total 94

Average of 143 pages =  $94\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 9450.

### SHIRLEY

gimcrack . . . . .	1635
gipsy. . . . .	1632
go. . . . .	1626

Average of 143 pages =  $1\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 150.

### SPENSER

ewed . . . . .	1579	get . . . . .	1596
exceed . . . . .	1596	get . . . . .	1590
excise . . . . .	1596	ghastliness . . . . .	1591
expire . . . . .	1590	ghastly . . . . .	1590
expire . . . . .	1593	ghastly . . . . .	1590
expire . . . . .	1590	gillie . . . . .	1596
extreate . . . . .	1596	gin . . . . .	1579
eyas . . . . .	1596	ginst . . . . .	1579
eye . . . . .	1590	glad . . . . .	1596
eye . . . . .	1590	glancing . . . . .	1596
eyespotted . . . . .	1590	glee . . . . .	1579
		go . . . . .	1591
		glen . . . . .	1596

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Total 11

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Total 13

## THE WORDMAKERS

Average of 143 pages = 12 : estimated total 1200.

### TOURNEUR

expiring . . . . 1609

Average of 143 pages =  $\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 50.

### WEBSTER

. . . . . ginimony . . . . 1607  
Average of 143 pages =  $\frac{1}{2}$  : estimated total 50.

The combined coinages of these writers aggregates in all probability to not less than 25,000 words. Of these the majority are either newly constructed, or imported from foreign languages ; the remainder are old terms infused with fresh meanings, hence *new*, and so considered by Dr. Murray.

Although the totals attributed to the various philologists differ in quantity the figures quoted must be considered in comparison to the amount of literature from which they are extracted. Thus regarded Tourneur's 100 words is on a par with the 2000 of the more prolific Bacon, Tourneur's fabrications being found *merely in two plays*.<sup>1</sup>

Viewed thus Sir Thomas Browne's total becomes even more extraordinary than it immediately appears. Sir John Evans in his Introduction to *Hydriotaphia* observes, "The language in which most of Browne's writings are composed is very peculiar, and in some respects un-English. The intense Lat-

1 It is questionable whether Shakespeare has not been unduly credited with a larger total than he is entitled to. Mr George Stronach has pointed out many instances of words wrongly attributed to Shakespeare, but owing in reality to his contemporary Bacon. The fact that there is a Shakespeare Concordance has in all probability influenced the attribution of many words to Shakespeare which Dr Murray's readers might on severer search have found elsewhere.

## THE WORDMAKERS

inity of his style is almost everywhere apparent, and, indeed, anyone comparing the Latin version of the *Religio Medici* with the English, would feel inclined to pronounce the former the original and the latter a too literal translation. Dr Johnson says with regard to Sir Thomas Browne's style that it is a 'tissue of many languages; a mixture of heterogeneous words brought together from distant regions, with terms originally appropriated to one art and drawn by violence into the service of another. But his innovations are sometimes pleasing, and his temerities happy.' Sir Thomas Browne says of himself in the *Religio Medici*, 'For my own part, besides the jargon and *patois* of several provinces, I understand no less than six languages'."

The erudition and Latinity of Sir Thomas Browne are matters of everyday note. As an illustration of his fondness for Latin coinages, a recent reviewer quoted the following passage from *Christian Morals*.

"The Compage of all Physical Truths is not so closely jointed, but opposition may find intrusion, nor always so closely maintained as not to suffer attrition. Many Positions seem quodlibetically constituted, and like a Delphian Blade will cut on both sides. Some Truths seem almost Falsehoods, and some Falsehoods almost Truths; wherein Falsehood and Truth seem almost æquilibriumly stated, and but a few grains of distinction to bear down the balance."

Great and exceptional as were Browne's capacities in diction, the dramatists could without effort

## THE WORDMAKERS

have given points to him. Compare for instance the following passage from Webster's *White Devil* (III. I. 1612.)

“ Most *literated* judges, please your Lordships so to *connive* your judgements to the view of this debauched and *diversivolent* woman, who such a black *concatenation* of mischief hath *effected* that to *extirp* the memory of it must be the *consummation* of her and her *projections*. ”

The love of word-making seems sometimes to have attained the proportions of a disease. Not infrequently we find the dramatists revelling in mere verbal fireworks.

My leg is not altogether unpropitiously shaped. There's a word 'unpropitiously'!

So help me your sweet bounty you have the most graceful presence, applausive elocuty, amazing volubility, polished adoration, delicious affability.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* pt. I. IV. 2.) 1602.

It was a frequent device to introduce a new word sustained and expounded by a synonym; at other times we find that upon some novelty making its introductory bow special attention is directed to its excellence. Thus:—

He is too peregrinate as I may call it.

(*Nathaniel draws out his table-book.*)

A most singular and choice epithet.

SHAKESPEARE (*Love's Labour's Lost* v. I.) 1588.

I scorn to retort the obtuse jest of a fool.

(*Balurdo draws out his writing-tables and writes.*)

*Retort* and *obtuse*, good words, very good words.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* pt. II. I. 3.) 1602.

## THE WORDMAKERS

Heres most amorous weather.

*Amorous* weather!

Is not amorous a good word?

MIDDLETON (*Roaring Girl* v. 1.) 1611.

As a coiner and connoisseur of language Bacon was pre-eminently conspicuous. When a young lawyer it was noted by a contemporary that a marked feature of the new pleader was the "unusual words wherewith he had spangled his speech."<sup>1</sup> "A Dictionary of the English language," said Dr Johnson, might be compiled from Bacon's works alone."

Lying at the British Museum are fifty pages from a commonplace book belonging to, and mostly in the handwriting of, Bacon. Passed over by Spedding as uninteresting and of no importance these sheets, known as the *Promus*, remained unpublished until 1883 when they were deciphered and edited by that accomplished Baconian scholar Mrs Henry Pott. In many of the entries we perceive the great *artifex verborum* apparently in the actual fact of word-making. Jotted down we note *real*, *brazed*, *peradventure*. Next to another entry, *uprouse*, stands the crucible of its creation, *abedd—rose you—owt bed*.

It has already been shewn by short examples (see *ante* pp. 29, 30) what great artists were Bacon and the dramatists in the elegancies of speech. Folio III of the *Promus* is endorsed "Formularies and Elegancies." It no doubt forms part of one of those collections by way of "provision or preparatory store for the furniture of speech and readiness of elocution" which Bacon

1 Letter to Anthony Bacon, quoted in *Is it Shakespeare*.



## THE WORDMAKERS

recommends in *The Advancement of Learning*. In this neglected MS. we perceive the great phrase artist in his workshop. As Dr Abbott observes the world ought not willingly to let die so courtly a compliment as entry No 1196.

“ I have not said all my prayers till I have bid you goodmorrow. ”

or so graceful an epistolary conclusion as entry No 1398.

“ Wishing you all happiness and myself opportunity to do you service. ”

Not only the fabric of modern language, but many of our common and everyday salutations seem first to have come into existence at this miraculous period. Dr. Murray credits the earliest printed appearance of *Good bye*, as a form of address at parting, to Shakespeare. We see it in process of formation as follows.

1588. “ I thank your worship. God be wy you ! ”

SHAKESPEARE (*Love's Labour's Lost* III. 1.)

1591. “ God b'uy my lord ! ”

IBID (1 *Henry VI.* III. 2.)

1600. “ Gallants, God buoye all ! ”

HEYWOOD (2 *Edward IV.*)

1607. “ Farewell, God b'y you Mistress ! ”

MIDDLETON and DEKKER (*Roaring Girl.*)

In his essay *Of Travel* Bacon writes, “ When a traveller return home let him... prick-in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country. ” In the *Promus* we find him thus at work striving to embellish the English tongue and engraft elegancies of

## THE WORDMAKERS

foreign growth and extraction. Upon his efforts Dr. Abbott comments as follows :—

“Independently of other interest, many of the notes in the *Promus* are valuable as illustrating how Bacon’s all-pervasive method of thought influenced him even in the merest trifles. *Analogy* is always in his mind. If you can say ‘Good-morrow,’ why should you not also say ‘Good-dawning’ (entry 1206)? If you can anglicise some French words, why not others? Why not say ‘Good-swoear’ (*sic*, entry 1190) for ‘Good-night,’ and ‘Goodmatens’ (1192) for ‘Good-morning?’ Instead of ‘twilight,’ why not substitute ‘vice-light’ (entry 1420)? Instead of ‘impudent,’ how much more forcible is ‘brazed’ (entry 1418)! On the lines of this suggestive principle Francis Bacon pursues his experimental path, whether the experiments be small or great, sowing as Nature sows superfluous seeds, in order that out of the conflict the strongest may prevail. For before we laugh at Bacon for his abortive word-experiments, we had better wait for the issue<sup>1</sup> of Dr. Murray’s great Dictionary which will tell us to how many of these experiments we are indebted for words now current in our language.

“Many interesting philological or literary questions will be raised by the publication of the *Promus*. The phrase ‘Good-dawning,’ for example, just mentioned, is found only once in Shakespeare, put into the mouth of the affected Oswald (*Lear*, II. 2, 1), ‘*Good-dawning* to thee, friend.’ The quartos are so perplexed by this strange

<sup>1</sup> This was written in 1883.

## THE WORDMAKERS

phrase that they alter 'dawning' into 'even,' although a little farther on Kent welcomes the 'comfortable beams' of the rising sun. Obviously 'dawning' is right; but did the phrase suggest itself independently to Bacon and Shakespeare? Or did Bacon make it current among court circles, and was it picked up by Shakespeare afterwards? Or did Bacon jot down this particular phrase, not from analogy, but from hearing it in the court? Here again we must wait for Dr. Murray's Dictionary to help us."

Unfortunately, Dr. Murray's readers seem to have missed "good-dawning." The expression is unnoted in the Dictionary.

In the creation of strange words, and the giving to them currency by weaving them into familiar dialogue, the dramatists well knew on how momentous a task they were employed. It would be unjust to assume that the poets' vocabularies were fortuitous, or dropped unconsciously from their pens. Nash asserts that he was compelled to resort to boisterous compound words in order to compensate for the great defect of the English tongue which "of all languages most swarmeth with the single money of monosyllables."<sup>1</sup> Dekker refers to the same fact; "When," says he, the English tongue first learned to speak, it was but a broken language: the singlest and the simplest Words flowed from her utterance: for she dealt in nothing but in Monosyllables, (as if to have spoken words of greater length would have crackt her Voice) by which meanes her Eloquence was

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*. vol. 40, p. 108.

## THE WORDMAKERS

poorest, yet hardest to learne, and so (but for necessity) not regarded amongst Strangers. Yet afterwards those Noblest Languages lent her Words and phrases, and turning those Borrowings into Good husbandry, shee is now as rich in Elocution, and as abundant as her proudest and Beststored Neighbors." (*Lanthorne and Candle-light.*)

In the 'cleansing of our language from barbarism' and the substitution of classicism and exotics it has been shewn how prodigious a share each dramatist respectively bore. In the *quality* of the coinage I confess myself unable to detect any appreciable distinction between the efforts of the dramatists on the one hand and of the philosophers on the other. In his *Apology for Actors* (1612), Heywood legitimately glories that "the English tongue, the most harsh, uneven, broken and mixed language in the world, now fashioned by the dramatic art, had grown to a most perfect language.."

Whether this new and wonderful creation was appreciated by the theatrical scum History has not recorded. If, in *Caliban*, Shakespeare has drawn the wild beast monster multitude, the words of Prospero may, it is possible, have a new and unexpected meaning.

"I pitied thee,  
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each  
One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,  
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like  
A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes  
With words that made them known."

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*Caliban.* “You taught me language; and my  
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you  
For learning me your language!” [profit on't

## CHAPTER XI

### PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

I have already given an instance of the unfortunate Massinger's familiarity with Bacon's private and unpublished correspondence. In the present Chapter some passages will be brought together pointing to the conclusion that not only Massinger, but many other players were privy to Bacon's notebooks and private papers.

The identity between certain *Promus* notes and passages in the works of Shakespeare have led some to suppose that the writings of Bacon and Shakespeare are the work of one brain. Dr. Abbott, in his preface to Mrs Pott's exhaustive work upon this subject observes:—

“The author has certainly shown that there is a very considerable similarity of phrase and thought between these two great authors. More than this, the *Promus* seems to render it highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that Francis Bacon in the year 1594 had either heard or read Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Let the reader turn to the passage in that play where Friar Laurence lectures Romeo on too early rising, and note the italicised words :

But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain  
Doth couch his limbs, there *golden sleep* doth reign:

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

Therefore thy earliness doth me assure  
Thou art *up-roused* by some distemperature.  
*Romeo and Juliet*, III. 3, 40.

“ Now let him turn to entries 1207 and 1215 in the following pages, [the *Promus*] and he will find that Bacon, among a number of phrases relating to early rising, has these words, almost consecutively, ‘golden sleep’ and ‘up-rouse’. One of these entries would prove little or nothing; but anyone accustomed to evidence will perceive that *two* of these entries constitute a coincidence amounting almost to a demonstration that either (1) Bacon and Shakespeare borrowed from some common, and at present unknown, source; or (2) one of the two borrowed from the other. The author’s belief is that the play is indebted for these expressions to the *Promus*; mine is that the *Promus* borrowed them from the play. But in any case, if the reader will refer to the author’s comments on this passage he will find other similarities between the play and the *Promus* which indicate borrowing of some sort. ”

Bacon’s *Promus* notes were made about the years 1594 to 1596; a date on the first page shews that they were begun on 5th December 1594; the first edition of *Romeo and Juliet* was published in 1597. There is, however, reason to believe that the play was written possibly as early as 1591, and there is therefore the possibility that Bacon may have had access to the Theatre MS. or have been present at a public performance.

The connection between *The Promus* and the Elizabethan drama in general seems to be a

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

peculiarly close one, and is not restricted to the Shakespeare plays. Although only a small proportion of the entries can be traced in Bacon's acknowledged works, on the other hand nearly all the dramatists seem constantly to have drawn upon them. "The collection," says Spedding, "is of a most miscellaneous character and seems by various marks in the MS. to have been afterwards digested into other collections which are lost." I have noted many instances of what seemingly is dramatic indebtedness to the *Promus* and give herewith a few.

Among other entries are many notes from the *Adagia* of Erasmus. "Some," says Mrs Pott, "are abbreviated or transcribed with an intentional alteration; thus in Eras. *Ad.* p. 370, 'Amazonum cantilena.' (*the song of the Amazons*), which Erasmus explains as a satirical allusion to the delicate and effeminate men whom the Amazons were wont to celebrate in their songs. In the *Promus* the word 'cantilena' is distinctly changed to 'cautilea.' There is no such Latin word as 'cautilea,' but the word seems to have become associated in Bacon's mind with 'caudex' *a tail*: for he appends to it a note, 'The Amazon's sting—delicate persons.' Here it is not difficult to discover the turn which the idea has taken. The tongue of delicate persons (especially of women) is their sting."

The following passages exhibit precisely this same peculiar idea.

*Petruchio.* "Come, come, you wasp; i' faith, you are too angry."

*Kate.* "If I be waspish, best beware my sting."



## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

*Petruchio*. "Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting? In his tail."

*Kate*. "In his tongue."

SHAKESPEARE (*Taming of the Shrew* II. I.) 1623.

[Women] are dangerous creatures, they sting at both ends doctor!

MASSINGER (*A Very Woman* III. 4.) 1634.

Women... relish much of scorpions for both have stings.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Custom of the Country* v. 5.) 1628-1647.

The sting i' th' tail.

IBID (*Mad Lover* I. I.) 1619-1647.

I.. a scorpions tail behind her spied

Pity such beauty such a monster hide.

ANON (*True Trojans* III. 6.) 1633.

A siren above

But below a very serpent; no female scorpion

Did ever carry such a sting; believe it.

MARMION (*Antiquary* I.) 1641.

Among other instances where the *Promus* appears to have furnished the germs of subsequently expanded thought, are the following.

### HAIL OF PEARL

Haile of Perle.

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-1596.

A shower in April, every drop an orient pearl.

MASSINGER (*Bashful Lover* IV. I.) 1636.

I'll set thee in a shower of gold and hail rich pearls upon thee.

SHAKESPEARE (*Antony and Cleopatra* II. 5.) 1623.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

See, see, how thick those showers of pearl do fall.  
BEAUMONT (*Poems*) 1647.

Showers of more price, more orient and more  
[round  
Than those that hang upon the Moons pale brow.  
FLETCHER (*Faithful Shepherdess* IV. 4.) 1629.

### UNDER THE ARMPITS

Things done under the armpits.  
BACON (*Promus*) 1594-1596.

Why the devil came you between us ?  
I was hurt under your arm.

SHAKESPEARE (*Romeo and Juliet* III. I.) 1597.

Under my mothers arms  
Like to a stealing tempest will I search.  
BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Queen of Corinth*  
III. I.) 1618-47.

### INNOCENCE A GUARD

Innocence is its own defence.  
BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

Innocence is to itself a guard.  
BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Elder Brother*  
v. I.) 1637.

The trust I have is in mine innocency.  
SHAKESPEARE (*2 Henry VI.* I.) 1592.

Protected in our innocence by Heaven.  
FORD (*Perkin Warbeck* II. I.) 1634.

Heaven.... doth defend the innocent.  
CHAPMAN (*Alphonsus* II. 3.) 1654.

### WORST—MEND

When things are at the period of ill they  
turn again.

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

Things at the worst will cease, or else, climb upward.

SHAKESPEARE (*Macbeth* IV. 2.) 1623.

When our days are at worst they will mend.

FIELD (*Amends for Ladies* I. I.) 1618.

Things at worst will mend.

ANON (*Sir John Oldcastle*) 1599-1600.

Things being at the worst begin to mend.

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* IV. I.) 1616-1623.

Things at the worst will now begin to mend.

MASSINGER (*Roman Actor*) 1629.

Time.... will show us better days, or end the worst.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck*) 1634.

## GOLDEN SLEEP

Golden sleep.

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

Golden sleep.

LYLY (*Gallathea* IV. 2.) 1592.

Golden sleep.

SHAKESPEARE (*Romeo and Juliet*) 1597.

Golden sleep.

BEN JONSON (*Reference mislaid*)

Golden sleep.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Poems*).

Golden sleep.

HEYWOOD. (*Golden Age* IV. I) 1611.

## MAN—A CANDLE

The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.

BACON (*Promus*, PROV. XX. 27) 1594-6.

Remember, gentlemen, your lives are like so many light tapers that are with care delivered to all of you to maintain; These with

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

wind-pufft wrath may be extinguished, with  
drunkenness put out, with negligence let fall.

GREENE (*Groatsworth of Wit*) 1592.

There burns my candle out.

SHAKESPEARE (3 *Henry VI.* II. 6.) 1592.

Man is a torch borne in the wind

A dream but of a shadow.

CHAPMAN (*Bussy d'Ambois* I. 1.) 1607.

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do

Not light them for ourselves.

SHAKESPEARE (*Measure for Measure* I. 1.) 1623.

She died on Monday then?

Aye. It cannot be, such a bright taper

Should burn out so soon!

DEKKER (*Honest Whore* I. 1.) 1604.

The maid like an unlighted taper was cold  
and chaste.

TOURNEUR (*Revengers Tragedy* II. 2) 1607.

The taper of my life consumed unto the snuff.

MASSINGER (*Roman Actor* II. 1.) 1626-1629.

Out brief candle.

SHAKESPEARE (*Macbeth* v. 5.) 1623.

[*He strangles Brachiano*] "Is it done?"

"The snuff is out."

WEBSTER (*White Devil* v. 3.) 1607-1612.

I recover like a spent taper and instantly go  
out.

IBID (*Ibid* v. 6.)

Till age blow out their lights.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Thierry* IV. 1.) 1621.

## FRIENDSHIP ETC. A MIRROR

*Il n'y a meilleur miroir que le viel amy.*

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

It is a strange thing what gross errors and extreme absurdities many... do commit for want of a friend to tell them of them... They are as men that look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favour.

BACON (*Essay : Friendship*) 1625.

I, your glass, will modestly discover to yourself  
That of yourself which you yet know not of.

SHAKESPEARE (*Troilus and Cressida* I. I.) 1609.

Serve as a glass for him to see his faults.

CHAPMAN (*All Fools* I. I.) 1605.

Be thou a glass for maids and I for mothers.

TOURNEUR (*Revenge Tragedy* IV. 4.) 1607.

Behold yourself in a true glass and see  
those unjust acts.

SHIRLEY (*The Cardinal* II. 3.) 1641.

A glass in which I see all my imperfections.

HEYWOOD (*Wise Woman of Hogsdon* v. 4.)  
1638.

Virtue is a glass

Wherein I may my errant life behold.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

The divine glass is the word of God.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

### SHRUB AND CEDAR

Lowly shrubs and trees that shade the plain.

BACON (*Promus*) (from Virgil.) 1594-6.

From lowest Juniper to Cedar tall.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* IV. 10.) 1590-1609.

As the lowly *shrub* is to the lofty *cedar*.

MASSINGER (*Great Duke of Florence* IV. 2.)  
1627-1636.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

Marcus, we are but *shrubs* no *cedars* we.

SHAKESPEARE (*Titus Andronicus* IV. 3.) 1594-1600.

As for myself I stand as *Joves huge tree*  
And others are but *shrubs* compared to me.

MARLOWE (*Edward II.*) 1593-1598.

We two have grown  
Like *cedars* up together and made all  
Seem *shrubs* to us.

HABINGDON (*Queen of Arragon* V. 1.) 1640.

The *shrub* is safe when the *cedar* *shaketh*.

KYD (*Solyman* V. 3.) 1592-1599.

*Cedars* are *shaken* when *shrubs* do feel no bruise.

DEKKER (*Honest Whore* IV. 1.) 1604.

Rather grow a base *shrub* below, than dare the  
winds and be a *cedar*.

RANDOLPH (*Muses Looking Glass* III. 2.) 1638.

My under hand begins to quake  
To think what lofty *cedars* I must *shake*  
.... *shrubs* shall equal bear the stroke  
Of my respectless, rude, satyric hand.

MARSTON (*Scourge of Villainy*) 1599.

Thus yields the *cedar* to the axes edge,

Whose lofty top overpeer'd *Joves* spreading tree  
And kept low *shrubs* from winter's powerful wind.

SHAKESPEARE (3 *Henry VI* V. 2.) 1592.

High trees that keep the weather from low houses  
But cannot shield the tempest from themselves.

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1592-1600.

These two fair *cedar* branches.... Fortune shot  
up *shrubs*.... to divorce these branches.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster* V. 3.) 1618-1620.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

### KNOW THYSELF

Know thyself.<sup>1</sup>

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

Know thyself.

SHAKESPEARE (*As You Like It* III 5.) 1623.

I have evermore endeavoured to know myself  
than to be known of others.

MARSTON (INTRO : *The Fawn*) 1606.

Soon shall we teach him to forget  
These proud presumptions and to know himself.

ANON (*King John*) 1591.

Have I passed so much time in ignorance  
And never had the mean to know myself  
Until this blessed hour ?

MIDDLETON (*Women beware Women* II. 1.) 1657.

How does your grace ?

Why, well ;

Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.  
I know myself now ; and I feel within me  
A peace above all earthly dignities.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry VIII* III. 2.) 1623.

Till now I never truly knew myself.

MASSINGER (*Guardian* III. 6.) 1633-1655.

### TRUE TO ONESELF

I prefer nothing but that they be true to  
themselves and I true to myself.

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

Be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others.

BACON (*Essay : Wisdom for a man's self*.)

To thine own self be true...

Thou canst not then be false to any man.

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet* I. 3.) 1603.

<sup>1</sup> Nosce Teipsum, *Juvenal* x.. 27.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

Farewell! Be only true unto thyself.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*reference mislaid.*)

Bajazet.... will be as true to him as to himself.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

Be to thyself thyself and not a changeling.

MIDDLETON (*Spanish Gypsy* II. I.) 1653.

If thus you be true unto yourself.

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* v. 2.) 1616-1623.

False both to yourself and me!

MIDDLETON (*Fair Quarrel* II. I.) 1617.

He that's faithless to his proper self

May be excused if he break faith with princes.

MARSTON (*Sophonisba* II. I.) 1606.

She will be true to thy bed who to herself was false.

FORD (*Love's Sacrifice* IV. I.) 1633.

## DEATH DISSOLVES

Death dissolves all things.

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

Let Heaven dissolve my life.

SHAKESPEARE (*Antony and Cleopatra* III. 2.) 1623.

O gracious Heavens, dissolve me into clay.

PEELE (*Edward I.*) 1593.

Dissolve my life.

FLETCHER (*Two Noble Kinsmen* III. 2.) 1613-1634.

Resolv'd to be dissolv'd (to die).

ANON (*Edward. III.* II. 2.) 1596.

O impious deed!

To make the heir of honor *melt* and bleed.

KYD (*Jeronimo* I. 6.) 1605.

O that this too, too solid flesh would *melt*

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet* I. 2.) 1603.



## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

### EXPPELLING NAILS

To drive out a nail with a nail.

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

One nail by strength drives out another.

SHAKESPEARE (*Coriolanus* IV. 7.) 1623.

One heat... doth drive out another: one passion doth expel another.

CHAPMAN (*Monsieur D'Olive* v. 1) 1606.

This one nail helps to drive the other out.

CHAPMAN (*Alphonsus* II. 2) 1636-1654.

Slaves are but nails to drive out one another.

TOURNEUR (*Revenger's Tragedy* IV. 1.) 1607.

### OVERSTRAINED HEARTSTRINGS

At length the string cracks by being overstrained (Spanish Proverb).

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

The strings of life began to crack.

SHAKESPEARE (*King Lear* v. 3.) 1608.

There the cords of life broke.

WEBSTER (*Malfi* IV. 2.) 1623.

Heart will't not break?... Veins, sinews, arteries why crack ye not?

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* I. 1.) 1602.

That broke the heartstrings.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Valentinian* IV. 1.)

1619-1647.

Oh my heartstrings!

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Thierry* IV. 1.) 1621.

Oh my heartstrings!

MASSINGER (*Duke of Milan* IV. 3.) 1623.

My heart strings break.

ANON (*King John*) 1591.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

My poor heart strings as tentered by his  
tyranny, cracked.

MASSINGER (*Bashful Lover* II. 7.) 1636-1655.

His swoln and rankling sinews crack.

PEELE (*David and Bathsheba*) 1599.

Her heart strings brast.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* VI. XI.) 1590.

Sighed as if her heart strings straight  
should crack.

GREENE (*Maiden's Dream*) 1591.

A careful examination of the *Promus* for the purpose of comparison with the drama, and especially the later drama, would probably yield a most surprising result. The few examples just previously cited came under my notice unsought, I had in fact noted the parallelisms before I became acquainted with the *Promus*, or suspected any connection. This manuscript now forms part of the Harleian collection in the British Museum; what befel it after Bacon's demise and how it passed into the possession of Lord Harley is unfortunately not known.

At the bottom of folio 109 there is an entry which reads, *The Law at Twickenham for mery tales*. This is, apparently, a reference to a scrivenerly and staff of skilled penmen maintained at Twickenham by Francis and his brother Anthony Bacon. It is believed that this scriptorium was originally started in Gray's Inn, but that it was removed to the privacy of Twickenham in order to escape the meddlesome attentions of the Scriveners Company which held a rigorous monopoly within the jurisdiction of the City. It seems to have been used for literary

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

purposes and for the ciphering and deciphering of political documents. In the correspondence of Anthony and Francis Bacon allusions to both purposes are fairly frequent. Thus a political agent, Standen, writes sending his travels in Turkey, Italy and Spain, "nothing too high in price for you," out of which, and the Zibaldone MS. Anthony is to copy what he likes. If Standen discovers a lost manuscript (his discourse on the Spanish State) Anthony shall have it. Morgan Colman, an English correspondent, writes in September 1592 that he is feeding himself with his papers which he trusts will deliver fruit well pleasing to Anthony.<sup>1</sup>

In 1594-5 we find Francis writing to Anthony from "Twickenham Park this 25th of January."

"I have here an idle pen or two specially one that was cozened, thinking to have got some money this term. I pray you send me somewhat else for them to write out beside your Irish collection which is almost done. There is a collection of Dr James [Dean of Christchurch] of foreign states largeliest of Flanders, which though it be no great matter, yet I would be glad to have it."

In 1596 Essex sends by his Secretary Cuffe "a true relation of the action at Cadiz," Cuffe writing to Anthony,

"The original you are to keep because my Lord charged me to turn either the whole or the sum of it into French and to cause it to be sent to some good personage in these parts under a false name or anonymously."

<sup>1</sup> Birch 1. 85.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

In 1601, or thereabouts, Francis writes to Anthony. "Good brother; I send you the supplication which Mr Topcliffe lent me. It is curiously written and worth the writing out for the art, though the argument be bad. But it is lent me but for two or three days. So God keep you."

This literary Bureau seems to have been in full swing for many years. In 1623 Bacon wrote to his friend Tobie Matthew;

"My labours are now most set to have those works which I had formerly published.... well translated into Latin by the help of some good pens which forsake me not."

We have little information as to the 'good pens,' but according to Archbishop Tenison, Ben Jonson was one of the group. Others were Hobbes the philosopher, and Thomas Bushell. Aubrey writes that the Lord Chancellor Bacon loved to converse with Hobbes. "He assisted his Lordship in translating several of his essays into Latin... His Lordship was a very contemplative person and was wont to contemplate in his delicious walks at Gorhambury and dictate to Mr. Bushell or some other of his gentlemen that attended him with ink and paper ready to set down presently his thoughts."<sup>1</sup>

Peter Boëner records of his master that he "seldom saw him take up a book. He only ordered his chaplain [William Rawley] and me to look in such and such an author for a certain place and then he dictated to us early in the morning what he had invented and composed during the night."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Hobbes*. Aubrey. Vol. II. pt. 2. p. 602.

<sup>2</sup> Spedding. Vol. 14. p. 566.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

The relations between Bacon and his body-guard of scribes and shorthand writers seem to have been of the most intimate and affectionate character. Spedding states that several of Bacon's MSS. are endorsed in his handwriting with the words "AD FILIOS;" while the exalted admiration of the "sons" for their philosopher and friend evinces itself in reverential eulogy.

There is reason to believe that certainly one of the manuscripts executed at Bacon's Scrivenery is now in existence. The document in question was discovered in the year 1867 among some papers at Northumberland House, Charing Cross, and is now at Alnwick Castle in the possession of the Duke of Northumberland. By the industry of Mr. T. le Marchant Douse<sup>1</sup> the handwriting of this MS. has been identified as that of John Davies of Hereford, a professional scrivener and the most skilful penman of his time. His profession was to copy documents for his various employers and also to give instruction in the art of penmanship. He was also a scholar educated at Oxford University and the writer of numerous Sonnets. One of these is addressed "To the royall, ingenious and all-learned Knight, Sr. Francis Bacon."

"Thy bounty and the Beauty of thy Witt  
Comprised in Lists of Law and learned Arts,  
Each making thee for great Employment fitt  
Which now thou hast, (though short of thy  
[deserts]  
Compells my pen to let fall shining Inke

<sup>1</sup> *The Northumberland Manuscript* by T. le Marchant Douse. London. 1904.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

And to bedew the Baies that deck thy Front ;  
And to thy health in Helicon to drinke  
As to her Bellamour the Muse is wont :  
For thou dost her embozom ; and, dost use  
Her company for sport twixt grave affaires :  
So utterst Law the liuelyer through thy Muse.  
And for that all thy Notes are sweetest Aires ;  
My Muse thus notes thy worth in ev'ry Line,  
With yncke which thus she sugers ; so, to  
[shine. ”

From this, as Mr Douse observes, it seems that Bacon had recently made him a present in money, or more probably had paid him lavishly for some assistance.

Apart, however, from the evidence of this sonnet, the contents of the MS. point to the conclusion that Davies must at some time have been in Bacon's employment. Six out of the nine pieces of which the MS. consists are transcripts of Bacon's unpublished work to which an outsider would scarcely have had access. The outer sheet forms an index or table of contents, and although the page has been scribbled over and damaged severely by fire and dust, the following titles can still be read upon it.

Mr. ffrancis Bacon.

Of tribute or giving what is dew.

The praise of the worthiest vertue.

The praise of the worthiest affection.

The praise of the worthiest power.

The praise of the worthiest person.

Philipp against Monsieur.

Earle of Arundell's letter to the Queen.

Speaches for my Lord of Essex at the tylt.

A speach for my Lord of Sussex, tilt.

Leycester's Commonwealth. Incerto autore.

Orationes at Graie's Inne revells.

## PROBLEMATIC MANUSCRIPTS

. . . . . Queen's Mate .  
By Mr. frauncis Bacon.  
Essaies by the same author.  
Rychard the second.  
Rychard the third.  
Asmund and Cornelia.  
Ile of dogs frmnt.

In addition to this list of contents the page has been scribbled over with words and phrases by some writer, either "for trial of his pens, or for experiments in handwriting." The repetition of the name "William Shakespeare," a line from *Lucrece* ("revealing day through every crany peepes"), and the enumeration of *Richard II* and *Richard III*, lead to the inference that that writer was employed upon copying these works of Shakespeare. As, when published, they were obtainable for a few pence, it seems irrational to imagine that anyone would waste trouble, time and expense by transcribing manuscript copies of them. If they were not published, how came one of Bacon's secretaries to be in possession of the MSS?

In addition to the works of Shakespeare we find enumerated on this interesting outer cover *Asmund and Cornelia*, believed to be a lost drama, and "*Ile o, Dogs frmnt* (fragment) by *Thomas Nashe inferior plaiers*."

Players, as Dyce states, seldom ventured to approach the houses of the aristocracy, and plays were "hardly regarded as literature." Milton, after mentioning that men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy, and that Seneca the philosopher is by some thought the author of those tragedies that go under another's name, concludes,

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“This is mentioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, *or rather infamy*, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day.”<sup>1</sup>

How comes it that we find the “infamous” works of Shakespeare and other “inferior” dramatists apparently engaging the attention of the decorous Francis Bacon?

It is idle to conjecture; nor do I purpose to indulge in roving guesses.

1 Intro: to *Samson Agonistes*.



## CHAPTER XII

### MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

In his biography of Lord Bacon Dean Church quotes the remark of M. de Remusat, "Two men stand out 'the masters of those who know' without equals up to their time among men, the Greek Aristotle, and the English Bacon. They agree in the universality and comprehensiveness of their conception of human knowledge and they were *absolutely alone* in their serious practical ambition to work out this conception.... Aristotle first, and for his time more successfully, and Bacon after him ventured on the daring enterprise of taking all knowledge for their province, and in this *they stood alone.*"

Gervinus, after commenting upon Shakespeare's genius, alludes to Bacon who "at that time in England stood as solitary as Shakespeare.... all competitors vanished, England was in the possession of a single man."<sup>1</sup>

It is not my intention to question the admitted super-eminence of Bacon and Shakespeare or to depress their encyclopædic minds to the level of the commonplace ; nevertheless it is abundantly clear that their abilities were shared in common by other men who are so little known or appreciated

<sup>1</sup> *Commentaries.* p. 884.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

that their names do not appear in any of our English Men of Letters Series.

The value of internal evidence varies according to different authorities. Mr Edwin Reed claims that :— “ The argument from parallelisms in general may be stated thus : One parallelism has no significance ; five parallelisms attract attention ; ten suggest inquiry ; twenty raise a presumption ; fifty establish a probability ; one hundred dissolve every doubt. ” Dr. A. B. Grosart assigns the anonymous *Selimus* to Robert Greene largely on account of one single parallelism ! He says, “ One specific passage by itself would have determined my assigning *Selimus* to Greene. ” He then cites a passage on the subject of the sweet content of country life (see p. 120) “ which (*meo iudicio*) needs only to be pondered to affirm the *Selimus* words to be from the same mind and pen. ” <sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, as Goethe observes, “ The world always remains the same ; the conditions are repeated ; one people lives, loves and feels like another ; why then should not one poet write like another ? The situations of life are alike why then should those of poems be unlike ? ”

The force of the parallelisms between Bacon and the dramatists lies chiefly in the prodigious gulf which separated their respective paths of life. The training and career of Francis Bacon “ the Glory of his age and nation, the Adorner and Ornament of Learning, ” <sup>2</sup> “ the wisest of Englishmen, ” <sup>3</sup> and those of the “ refuse sort ” swarming like vermin around the playhouses, were, surely, as

<sup>1</sup> Intro : *Selimus*. Temple Dramatists.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Rawley.

<sup>3</sup> Ruskin.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

widely divergent as it is possible to conceive. I invite the reader to turn back to pp. 8-14 and refresh his memory of the dramatic temperament. As Mr. Saintsbury correctly says, the Elizabethan theatre was "the nucleus of all that was vile and hazardous in the floating population." The frightful conditions of the lower orders will not bear detailed description. Dr. Jessopp characterises the sediment of mediæval town life as "a dense slough of stagnant misery, squalor, famine, loathsome disease and dull despair such as the worst slums of London, Paris or Liverpool know nothing of."<sup>1</sup> In Tudor times these and additional "Italianate" horrors were plebeian characteristics, and the dramatists were admittedly and essentially men of the people. What in common had the supreme and peerless intellect of Francis Bacon with the brain of "sporting Kyd," of the blaring young atheist Marlowe, of the scoundrelly Greene, or the lascivious Peele? "Drink," said Drummond of Ben Jonson, "was the element in which he lived" and this seems to have been equally true of all "the tribe of Ben."

What affinity was there between the souls of Hamlet and Christopher Sly? A recent biographer, shocked at the careers of the dramatic poets, endeavours to dissociate Marlowe from their Society and to depict him as the companion of the great and good,

"His words and thoughts are so noble, and his sentiments so lofty, that the mind revolts at seeing his name coupled with the debauched

<sup>1</sup> *Story of London*. Wheatley. p. 162.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

and dissolute desperadoes it has been customary to like it with."<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the contrast between the environments of poets and philosophers, a second point to be borne in mind when considering Elizabethan parallelisms is the highly important one that Language was not then ready-shaped to the purpose. Writers did not as they do now, possess a cut and dried vocabulary of word and phrase. Zones of thought, nowadays mapped out and familiar, were then districts unknown and unsurveyed.

The parallels which I quote in this chapter are not intrinsically of pith and moment, but form a necessary part of my demonstration, that the minutest currents of various minds ran simultaneously in identical channels.

I am of course aware that Thought is the property of him who can entertain it and adequately place it. "A certain awkwardness," says Emerson, "marks the use of borrowed thoughts; but as soon as we have learned what to do with them they become our own." One can understand and sympathise with an author who polishes and resets an intellectual jewel or who assimilates a felicitous phrase; but to find great artists systematically playing the sedulous ape and stooping to such senseless and unprofitable filchings as for instance the following is to say the least, perplexing.

I furrowed Neptune's seas  
Northeast as far as the frozen Rhine.  
Leaving fair Voya, cross'd up Danuby

<sup>2</sup> *Marlowe and his Associates*. Ingram.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

As high as Saba, whose entrancing streams  
Cut 'twixt the Tartars and the Russians.

GREENE (*Orlando Furioso*) 1594.

I have crossed the frozen Rhine.  
Leaving fair Po I sail'd up Danuby  
As far as Saba, whose entrancing streams  
Cut 'twixt the Tartars and the Russians.

PEELE (*Old Wives' Tale*) 1595.

Though the most vitriolic jealousies seem to have existed, it was a common occurrence for the poets to give themselves away to any nimble and watchful antagonists by boldly annexing competitors' lines. Thus, for instance :

As when the Sun attir'd  
in glistening robe  
Comes dancing from his  
oriental gate  
And bridegroom-like  
hurls through the  
gloomy air  
His radiant beams.

PEELE (*David &  
Bathsheba*) 1599.

At last the golden orient-  
tal gate  
Of greater Heaven 'gan  
to open fair  
And Phœbus, fresh as  
bridegroom to his mate,  
Came dancing forth shak-  
ing his dewy hair  
And hurl'd his glist'ring  
beams through gloomy  
air.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen*  
Bk. 1. C. v. St. 2.)

1590.

Unfortunately, many parallelisms were published apparently simultaneously so that it is most difficult to decide who originated a thought and who stole it. On pages 118 and 307 the reader will note instances of simultaneous utterance. There was another very notable example in 1590.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

Upon the top of all his loftie crest,	I'll ride in golden armour like the sun ;
A bounch of heares dis- coloured diversly,	And in my helm a triple plume shall spring,
With sprinckled pearle and gold full richly drest,	Spangled with diamonds, dancing in the air,
Did shake, and seem'd to daunce for iollity ;	To note me Emperor of the threefold world ;
Like to an almond-tree ymounted hye	Like to an almond-tree y-mounted high
On top of greene Selinis all alone,	Upon the lofty and celes- tial mount
With blossoms brave be- deckéd daintily ;	Of ever-green Selinus, quaintly deck'd
Whose tender locks do tremble every one	With blooms more white than Erycina's brows,
At everie little breath that under heaven is blowne.	Whose tender blossoms tremble every one

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen*  
Bk. I. C. VII. St. 32.)  
1590.

At every little breath  
that thorough heaven  
is blown.

MARLOWE (*Tambur-  
laine* II. Act. IV. Sc. 3.)  
1590.

The parallel passages which compose this chapter are arranged without art or order. I have selected them merely as being further illustrative of the identity of the writers' minds, faculties, and predilections.

### WAR OF LILIES AND OF ROSES

This silent *war* of lilies and of roses, which Tarquin viewed in her fair face's field.

SHAKESPEARE (*Lucrece*) 1594.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

A cheek wherein for interchange of hue  
A *wrangling strife* 'twixt lily and the rose.

GREENE (*Morando*) 1587.

Cheeks where the rose and lily are *in combat*.

KYD (*Soliman* IV. 1.) 1599.

The lilies *contending* with the roses in her cheek.

MASSINGER (*Great Duke of Florence* v. 3.)

1627-36.

The lily and the rose most sweetly strange  
Upon your dimple cheeks do *strive* for change.

FORD (*'Tis Pity*. I. 4.) 1633.

(If these passages were from the works of the same writer we should say how ingeniously he had avoided repeating himself. It is never a case of blending or meeting amicably, but always war or strife.)<sup>1</sup>

### PERAMBULATING PHŒBUS.

*Eight and twenty* times hath Phœbus' car run  
out his yearly course.

BEAUMONT (*The Woman Hater* II. 1.) 1607.

Full *thirty* times hath Phœbus' cart gone round.

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet* III. 2.) 1603.

*Thrice ten* times Phœbus with his golden beams  
Hath compassed the circle of the sky.

GREENE (*Alphonsus* IV.) 1599.

*Twice fifteen* times hath fair Latona's son<sup>2</sup>  
*walked about the world* with his great light.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

Now hath the sun with his lamp burning  
light *walked about the world*.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* II. IX.) 1590-1609.

<sup>1</sup> The idea probably originated with *Chaucer*. See *The Knights Tale*

<sup>2</sup> Phœbus was the son of Jupiter and Latona.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

### THE GREY-EYED MORN.

The grey eyed morn.

SHAKESPEARE (*Romeo and Juliet*) 1597.

The grey eyed morn.

CHAPMAN (*Bussy d'Ambois* v. 1.) 1607.

The grey eyed morn.

BEAUMONT (*Poems*).

The grey eyed morning.

ANON (*Sir John Oldcastle* iv. 1.) 1599-1600.

The grey eyed morning.

TOURNEUR (*Atheist's Tragedy* i. 3.) 1611.

Grey eyed morn.

NABBES (*Microcosmos*: iv.) 1637.

The grey eyed morn.

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*.) 1592-1600.

### THE GLOOMY AIR.

The gloomy air.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* i. v. 2.) 1590-1609.

The glomy air.

PEELE (*David and Bathsheba*) 1599.

The gloomy air.

MARLOWE (*Faustus*) 1588-1604.

The gloomy air.

GREENE (*Orlando Furioso*) 1591-1594.

### SULLEN EARTH

Sullen earth.

ANON (*Arden of Feversham*) 1592.

Sullen earth.

SHAKESPEARE (II *Henry VI.*) 1592.

Sullen earth.

ANON (*Sir John Oldcastle*) 1599-1600.



## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

Sullen earth.

BEAUMONT (*Poems*).

Sullen earth.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Island Princess* I. 3.)

1621-47.

### YOUR CREATURE

I am her creature.

BACON (*Letters*. Spedding Vol. II. p. 201.) 1600.

I am your creature.

MASSINGER (*Bashful Lover* I. 1.) 1636.

I am your creature.

CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* I. 2.) 1654.

I (am) your creature.

HEYWOOD (*Challenge for Beauty*) 1636.

I am your creature.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Spanish Curate* IV.

I.) 1622.

I am still your creature.

SHIRLEY (*The Traitor* IV. I.) 1631.

### POVERTY OF SPIRIT

Poverty of spirit.

SHAKESPEARE (*Romeo and Juliet* III. 3. 7.) 1597.

It would betray a poverty of spirit.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Laws of Candy*

I. 2.) 1647.

Would argue in us poverty of spirit.

CHAPMAN (PRO : *Bussy d'Ambois*) 1607.

Cannot but speak my poverty of spirit.

MASSINGER (*Great Duke of Florence* v. 2.)

1627?-1636.

### O THAT I WERE A MAN !

O that I were a man !

SHAKESPEARE (*Much Ado About Nothing*) 1600.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

O that I were a man !

CHAPMAN (*Monsieur d'Olive* v. 1.) 1606.

O that I were a man !

MASSINGER (*Bondman* II. 3.) 1619-1623.

That I were a man !

SHIRLEY (*The Cardinal*) 1641.

In addition to the preceding phrases the following are frequent :—

What a caterwauling do you keep here !

What a coil's here !

Sits the wind there ?

Thereby hangs a tale.

O my prophetic soul !

Mark the sequel.

Lend me your ear.

## ART AND NATURE

It is the fashion to talk as if Art were something different from Nature.

BACON (*Descriptio Globi Intellectualis*) 1612.

Nature is not at variance with art, nor art with nature they being both servants of His Providence. Art is the perfection of nature.... In brief all things are artificial, for nature is the art of God.

SIR T. BROWNE (*Religio Medici*) 1637-1643.

Art itself is nature.

SHAKESPEARE (*Winter's Tale* IV. 4.) 1623.

All that nature did omit

Art, playing second Nature's part, supplied it.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* IV. 10.) 1590-1609.

Art and Nature met in one.

PEELE (*Arraignment of Paris*) 1584.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

- Let time wear out  
What art and nature cannot bring about.  
FLETCHER (*Faithful Shepherdess* II. 3.) 1610.  
Art curbs nature, nature guideth art.  
MARSTON (*Scourge*) 1599.

### EX NIHILO

- Out of nothing, nothing can be made.  
BACON (*Novum Organum*) 1620.  
Nothing can be made out of nothing.  
SHAKESPEARE (*King Lear* I. 4.) 1608.  
Out of nothing, nothing is bred.  
MARSTON (*What you will* IV. I.) 1607.  
Ex nihilo, nihil fit.  
CHAPMAN (*All Fools* V. I.) 1604-1605.

### A WORLD GIRDLE

- The motion of the air in great circles such  
as are under the *girdle of the world*.  
BACON (*Sylva Sylvarum*) 1626.  
The winds... travel fastest at the Equator,  
or *Girdle of the Earth*.  
BACON (*History of Winds*) 1621.  
I'll put a girdle round about the earth.  
SHAKESPEARE (*Midsummer Night's Dream* II.  
2.) 1600.  
To put a girdle round about the world.  
CHAPMAN (*Bussy d'Ambois* Pt. I. I. I.) 1607.  
Putting a girdle round about the world.  
MASSINGER (*Maid of Honour* I. I.) 1628-1632.  
I ha' put a girdle 'bout the world.  
SHIRLEY (*Bird in Cage* IV. I.) 1633.  
Put a girdle 'bout the world.  
WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* III. I.) 1623.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

Methinks I put a girdle about Europe.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Queen of Corinth*  
II. I.) 1618-47.

A girdle make whose buckles stretched to the  
[length  
Shall reach from th' Arctic to the Antarctic  
[pole

FORD (*Sun's Darling* II. I.) 1624-1656.

### CONSTANT IN INCONSTANCY :

The moon so constant in inconstancy.

BACON (Paraphase of Psalm civ).

There is nothing about "constant in inconstancy"  
in contemporary translations of Psalm civ. In our  
modern version the words are "He appointeth  
the moon for seasons."

O Fortune constant in inconstancy.

PEELE (*Battle of Alcazar*) 1594.

Fortune... constant in nothing but inconstancy.

LODGE (*Rosalynde*) 1590.

Fortune... constant in nothing but inconstancy.

GREENE (*Morando*) 1587.

Women... only constant in inconstancy.

MARSTON (*Malcontent* I. 6.) 1604.

Constant in nought but inconstancy.

ANON. (*Fair Maid of Bristowe*) 1605.

### THE SUN — AN EYE :

A lamp that shineth to others and yet seeth  
not itself.... *the Eye of the World* that both  
carrieth and useth light.

BACON (*Gesta Grayorum*) 1594.

The Sun, eye of the world.

BACON (Paraphrase of Psalm civ).

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

There is nothing about "eye of the world" in contemporary translations of Psalm civ. In our modern version the words are "The sun knoweth his going down."

The great eye of Heaven.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* I. III. 4.) 1590-1609.

Heaven's secret, searching eye.

GREENE (*Never too late*) 1590.

Heaven's bright eye.

IBID.

Heaven's bright eye.

PEELE (*David and Bathsheba*) 1599.

Heaven's bright eye.

KYD (*Soliman* III. I.) 1592-1599.

The Sun, the eyesight of the glorious firmament.

ANON (*Taming of a Shrew*) 1594.

The Sun, the world's great eye.

CHAPMAN (*All Fools* I. I.) 1604-1605.

The Beauteous eye of Heaven.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John* IV. I.) 1623.

Shine, thou eye of Heaven.

FIELD (*Woman's a Weathercock* IV. 2.) 1612.

As spotless as the eye of Heaven.

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* IV.) 1613.

The eye of Heaven.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*The Prophetess*  
II. 3.) 1622-1647.

The great eye of Heaven.

IBID (*Fair Maid of the Inn* I. I.) 1626-  
1647.

The broad eyed lamp of Heaven.

FORD (*Sun's Darling* I. I.) 1624-1656.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

The liberal eye of Heaven which may shine  
where it pleases.

MASSINGER (*Bashful Lover* IV. 2.) 1636-1655.

My love shall brave the eye of Heaven at noon

Bid her be free and general as the Sun  
Who shines upon the basest weed that grows.

ANON (*Edward III.* II. I.) 1596.

Swarthy darkness popped out Phœbus eye  
And blurred the *jocund*<sup>1</sup> face of bright cheeked *day*.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* II.) 1602.

The world's eye shines hot and open on't.

MARSTON (*Dutch Courtezan* II. I.) 1605.

The Sun's bright eye.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck*) 1634.

The world's bright eye.

KYD (*Soliman* I. 6.) 1592-1599.

### THE WORLD A STAGE :

Life is nothing but a continual acting on  
the stage.

BACON (*Masque for Essex*) 159-.

What more pleasing to ourselves than *in this  
theatre of mans's life....* to sit and learn prevention  
by other men's perils.

LODGE (PREFACE to *Josephus*) 1602.

Men must learn that *in this theatre of man's  
life* it is reserved only for God and the angels  
to be lookers on.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

I have given the rule : where a man cannot  
fitly play his own part.... he may quit the stage.

BACON (Essay : *Friendship*) 1625.

1 Compare "*jocund day*" Shakespeare. (R. & J.)

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

If you cannot play two subtle fronts under one hood.... off this world's stage!

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida*. INTRO :) 1602.

Heaven is our heritage

Earth but a player's stage.

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1592-1600.

I hold the world but as... a stage

Where every man must play a part

And mine a sad one.

SHAKESPEARE (*Merchant of Venice* I. I.) 1600.

I account this world a tedious theatre

For I do play a part in't 'gainst my will.

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* IV. I.) 1616?-1623.

Is not all the world esteemed a stage?

CHAPMAN (*Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* I. I.)  
1613.

This greenwood is no more than a stage

Where everyone must act his part.

ROWLEY (INTRO: *Middleton's Fair Quarrel*) 1617.

All the world's a stage

And all the men and women merely players.

SHAKESPEARE (*As you like it* II. 7.) 1623.

All the world's a play.... all are players.

BEN JONSON (*The New Inn* II. I.) 1629-1631.

Are you on the stage, you talk so boldly?

The whole world being one, this place is not  
[exempted.]

MASSINGER (*Roman Actor*) 1626-1629.

This stage of life.

MASSINGER (*Maid of Honour* v. 2.) 1632.

The world the stage to act on.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Thierry* IV. 2.) 1621.

The world to me is but a dream or mock

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

show and we all therein but pantaloons and antics.... Men.... when they have played their parts and had their exits must step out and give the moral of their scenes.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE (*Religio Medici*) 1635-1643.

### PERUSE THIS PAPER :

His Lordship desired me to leave with him the papers ....till he had perused them.

BACON (Letter to KING JAMES) 1614.

I humbly pray your Majesty to peruse this enclosed paper.

BACON (Letter to KING JAMES) 1616.

Please you at any of your more leisured hours to vouchsafe the perusal of these slight papers.

HEYWOOD (*Fair Maid of West. DEDI.*) 1631.

Please but your excellence to peruse that paper.

MIDDLETON (*Women beware Women* v. 1.) 1623.

Pray you peruse that letter.

SHAKESPEARE (*Twelfth Night* v. 1.) 1623.

Please you peruse this letter.

ROWLEY, FORD, & DEKKER (*Witch of Edmonton* 1. 2.) 1658.

Please you peruse this paper.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck* 1. 2.) 1634.

Please you peruse [*this letter*].

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Laws of Candy* III. 2.) 1647.

At your opportunity peruse this paper.

SHIRLEY (*Witty Fair One* II. 2.) 1628-1633.

Peruse this letter.

ANON (*King John*) 1591.



## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

*Stage directions.* ("presents Sophonisba with a paper which she having perused.")

MARSTON (*Sophonisba* II. 1.) 1606.

### *WALK INVISIBLE.*

The wits of these days are too much refined....  
for any man to walk invisible.

BACON (*Observations on a Libel*) 1592.

We walk invisible.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry IV* II. 1.) 1598.

That I may walk invisible to all.

MARLOWE (*Dr. Faustus* 8.) 1588-1604.

Ha! not know me; do I walk invisible?

SHIRLEY (*Witty Fair One* v. 2.) 1628?-1633

Did he think to walk invisibly before our eyes?

MARSTON (*The Fawn* III. 3.) 1606.

### *DEATH-TIPPED SWORD.*

Death sat on the point of that enchanted spear.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* III. 1.) 1590.

Upon my swords sharp point standeth pale Death.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

Pale Death sits on my panting soul.

KYD (*Soliman* v. 5.) 1599.

Upon the point Death sat.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*The False One* v. 4.)

1620-1647.

Upon this point thy death sits.

IBID (*The Custom of the Country* I. 2.)

1628-1647.

Warlike John, and in his forehead sits a bare-  
[ribbed Death.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John* v. 2.) 1623.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

I reserve my rage to sit on my sword's point.  
WEBSTER (*Devil's Law Case* II. I.) 1623.

See'st thou revenge sit pale upon the point?  
FALKLAND (*Marriage Night* IV. I.) 1664.

Sirrah, prepare you  
For angry Nemesis sits on my sword.  
GREENE (*Orlando*) 1591-1594.

### IFS AND ANDS

The judges thought it was a dangerous thing to  
admit Ifs and Ands to qualify words of treason.  
BACON (*Henry VII*) 1621.

*Ped.* If madame Belimperia be in love—

*Lor.* What villain! Ifs and Ands! (*Offers  
to kill him*)

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* II. I.) 1594-1602.

*Hastings.* If they have done this thing my  
gracious lord—

*Gloucester.* If! Thou protector of this damn-  
ed strumpet

Talk'st thou to me of Ifs? Thou art a traitor.  
Off with his head!

SHAKESPEARE (*Richard III.* III. 4.) 1597.

Away with these Ifs and Ands.

DEKKER (*Shoemakers Holiday* V. I.) 1599-1600.

### FALSE FIRE

I think also it were not amiss to make a *false  
fire*.... to see what that will work with him [*i. e.  
with a view to frightening the prisoner Peacham into  
confessing.*]

BACON (Letter to KING JAMES) 1614.

What! frightened with false fire!

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet.*) 1603.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

I only give false fire and would be loth to shoot you off.

CHAPMAN (*Conspiracy of Byron* IV. 1.) 1608.

This false fire has so took with him that he's ravished.

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* II. 2.) 1606-1613.

Like false fires flash to fright our trembling senses.

FORD (*Lover's Melancholy* IV. 1.) 1629.

These old saws.... are but false fires.

LYLY (*Mother Bombie* III. 1.) 1594.

Feeding his false fire.

MASSINGER (*Great Duke of Florence* I. 1.) 1636.

False fires that never come from your heart.

DAY (*Humour out of Breath* III. 1.) 1608.

### BUZZES.

Suspitions that the mind of itself gathers are but buzzes. But suspitions that are artificially nourished and put into men's heads by the tales and whisperings of others have stings.

BACON (*Essay : Suspicion*) 1625.

You buzz into my head strange likelihoods  
And fill me full of doubts.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*The Prophetess* I. 1.)

1622-1647.

Swift starting fear

Hath buzzed a cold dismay through all our army.

ANON (*Edward III.* IV. 6.) 1596.

They have hired me to undermine the duchess  
And buzz these conjurations in her brain.

SHAKESPEARE (*II Henry VI.* I. 2.) 1592.

Buzz'd in the brain of the unhappy mother  
a dreadful dream.

PEELE (*Tale of Troy*) 1589.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

See thou buzz into the countys ear....  
He will not think t'is feigned.

GREENE (*Orlando*) 1591-1594.

I will buzz Andreas landing  
Which once but crept into the vulgar mouth,  
Is hurried here and there and sworn for truth.

KYD (*Jeronimo* II. 2.) 1588-1605.

"Thou art a spirit. God cannot pity thee."  
"Who buzzéd in mine ear I am a spirit?"

MARLOWE (*Faustus* 6.) 1588-1604.

'Twas but a buzz devised by him to set  
your brains awork.

CHAPMAN (*Widow's Tears* II. 1.) 1612.

This murderous devil having slain my father.  
Buzz'd cunningly into my credulous ears.

IBID (*Alphonsus* v. 4.) 1654.

The people may buzz and talk of't.

WEBSTER (*Devil's Law Case* I. 2.) 1623.

## CHEW, SWALLOW, DIGEST.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be  
*swallowed*, and some few to be *chewed* and  
*digested*.

BACON (*Essay, Studies.*) 1598.

Go turn the volumes over I have read, eat  
and digest them.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Elder Brother*  
III. 5.) 1637.

My travel, *reading*, wit ;  
All these *digested*....  
*Chews* his thoughts double.

IBID (*Wit Without Money* I. 1.) 1639.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

Capital crimes, *chewed*, *swallowed* and *digested*, appear before us.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry V.* II. 2.) 1600.

You'll forbear to *swallow*

What he cannot *chew*; nay 'tis injustice truly  
. . . . that you should starve  
For that which only he can feast his eye withal  
And not *digest*.

MARSTON (*The Fawn* III. 3.) 1606. ?

### FOOLISH IGNORANT INDIAN.

Whose hand, like the base Indian, throws a pearl away richer than all his tribe.

SHAKESPEARE (*Othello* v. 2.) 1622.

The jewels that she wore, more worth than all her tribe.

WEBSTER (*Appius and Virginia* IV. 1.) 1654.

I prize my life at no more value than a foolish ignorant Indian does a diamond.

CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* v. 2.) 1654.

### SLEEPS BURIED IN SILENCE AND OBLIVION

The earliest antiquity *lies buried in silence and oblivion*.

BACON (PREFACE. *Wisdom of the Ancients*). 1609.

{ ...lies wrapt in eternal *silence*.  
SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* Bk. I. I. XLI.) 1590-1609.  
{ ...and in *oblivion* ever buried is.  
IBID (II. 3.)

Go, *bury* thy head in *silence* and let *oblivion* be thy utmost hope.

MARSTON (*The Fawn* v. 5.) 1606.

*Sleep* in sweet *oblivion*.

IBID (*Sophonisba* I. I.) 1606.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

May the cause.... be *buried* in everlasting *silence*.

MASSINGER (*Unnatural Combat* II. 1.) 1639.

*Slept in silence.*

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster* III. 1.)

1613?-1620.

....*buried in oblivion.*

FLETCHER (*Monsieur Thomas* I. 1.) 1639.

Cæsar that in *silence* might have *slept*.

KYD (*Cornelia*) 1594.

*Slept still in oblivion.*

CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* I. 2.) 1654.

## HELEN OF TROY

Was this the face that *launched a thousand ships*  
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?

MARLOWE (*Faustus*) 1588-1604.

She is a pearl whose price

Hath *launched above a thousand ships*.

SHAKESPEARE (*Tr. and Cressida*) 1599-1609.

I tell thee, sweet, a face not half so fair

As thine hath arm'd whole nations in the field

And *brought a thousand ships* to Tenedos

To sack lamented Troy.

MAY (*The Heir* III) 1620.

## RACK.

I include the following references to "rack" because the well known passage in *The Tempest* has caused commentators perplexity, some thinking that "leave not a rack behind" should be amended to "wreck behind."

The winds in the upper regions which move the clouds above, which we call the rack.

BACON (*Sylva Sylvarum*) 1622.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

Like inconstant clouds  
That rack upon the carriage of the winds.  
ANON (*Edward III.* II. 1.) 1596.

Shall I stray into the middle air  
And stay the sailing rack?  
FLETCHER (*Faithful Shep.* v. 5.) 1610.

The sun sat lordly in his pride  
Not shadowed with the veil of any cloud.  
The welkin had no rack.  
GREENE (*Never too late*) 1590.

Leave not a rack behind.  
SHAKESPEARE (*Tempest*) 1623.

Beating the clouds into their swiftest rack.  
PEELE (*David and Bathsheba*) 1599.

## THROUGH SMALL CRANNIES

You may see great objects through small crannies.  
BACON (*Sylva Sylvarum*) 1627.

I have *seen the day* of wrong through the  
*little hole* of discretion.  
SHAKESPEARE (*Love's Labour's Lost* v. 2.) 1598.

Aliena... could *see day* at a *little hole*.  
LODGE (*Rosalynde*) 1590.

I see this love you speak of through your  
daughter *although the hole be little*.  
BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Knight of the  
Burning Pestle* IV. 3.) 1611-1613.

## OLD MOLE !

Old mole, canst work.... so fast?  
SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet*) 1603.

Work you that way, old mole?  
FORD (*'Tis Pity* I. 2.) 1633.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

This mole does undermine me.

WEBSTER (*Duchess of Malfi* II. 3.) 1616-1623.

I give all the world leave to whet their wits  
against me ; work like moles to undermine me.

MARMION (*Antiquary* I.) 1641.

He had so many moles undermining him.

BACON (*Henry VII.*) 1622.

We... will undermine their secret works though  
they have digged like moles.

MASSINGER (*Great Duke of Florence* III. 1.) 1636.

### LOVE CREEPS

This history being but a leaf or two, I pray  
your pardon if I send it for your recreation,  
considering that *Love must creep where it cannot  
go.*

BACON (Letter to KING JAMES).

Love will creep in service where it dare not go.

SHAKESPEARE (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* IV. 2.)

1623.

I remember the saying of Dante that love  
cannot roughly be thrust out, but it must easily  
creep.

GREENE (*Mamillia*) 1584.

Love is a fire, love is a coal

Whose flame creeps in at every hole.

PEELE (*The Hunting of Cupid*) 1591.

Love ought to creep.

GREENE (*Friar Bacon*) 1594.

Love should creep.

LYLY (*Endymion* III. 4.) 1597.

Now what is love ? I will you show

A thing that creeps and cannot go.

HEYWOOD (*Rape of Lucrece*) 1608.



## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

Yet what is love, good shepherd show.  
A thing that creeps, it cannot go.

SIR W. RALEIGH.

Love.... creeps in at a mouse hole.

MIDDLETON (*The Changeling* III. 3.) 1621.

### LOVERS' PERJURIES<sup>1</sup>

At lovers perjuries they say Jove laughs.

SHAKESPEARE (*Romeo and Juliet*) 1591.

Jove himself sits and smiles at lovers perjuries.

DAY (*Humour out of Breath* IV. 1.) 1608.

No pain is due to lovers perjury  
If Jove himself laugh at it.

FIELD & MASSINGER (*Fatal Dowry* IV. 2.)

[1632.

The Gods.... laughers at lovers deceits.

LYLY (*Endymion* I. 2.) 1591.

Venus be thou propitious to my wiles  
And laugh at lovers perjuries.

ANON (*True Trojans* II. 1.) 1633.

### LOVE A FOLLY

Love.... the child of folly.

BACON (*Essay, Of Love.*) 1612.

Love is folly.... 'tis madness.

GREENE (*Philomela*) 15--.

By love the young and tender wit is turned  
to folly.

SHAKESPEARE (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* I.

I.) 1623.

That mad fit which fooles call Love.

SPENSER (*Hymns*) 1611.

1 from Ovid.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

Love is merely [wholly] a madness.

SHAKESPEARE (*As you like it* III. 2.) 1623.

Love is a madness.

DEKKER (*Old Fortunatus* III. 1.) 1600.

Are you not ashamed to make  
Yourself a slave to the base lord of love  
Begot of fancy and of beauty born?

CHAPMAN (*All Fools* I. 1.) 1604-1605.

What uncouth fit, what malady is this that  
thou dost prove?

....Love's our common wrack

That gives us bane to bring us low and lets  
us medicine lack.

PEELE (*Arraignment of Paris*) 1584.

Love is a discord and a strange divorce  
Betwixt our sense and reason, by whose power  
As mad with reason we admit that force.

GREENE (*Menaphon*) 1589.

Love.... puzzles reason, distracts the freedom  
of the soul, renders a wise man a fool, and a  
fool wise in's own conceit—not else.

FORD (*Fancies Chaste and Noble* III. 3.) 1638.

Love is but a straggling from our reason.

SHIRLEY (*Witty Fair One* I. 2.) 1628-1633.

Love is a consuming of wit and restoring of  
folly, a staring blindness and a blind gazing.

LYLY (*Love's Metamorphosis* III. 1.) 1601.

Love, is anything more ridiculous?

SHIRLEY (*Hyde Park* I. 2.) 1637.

It is not granted men to love and be wise.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

The Gods themselves cannot be wise and love.

MARSTON (*Dutch Courtezan* II. 1.) 1605.

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

To be wise and love exceeds man's might ;  
that dwells with Gods above.

SHAKESPEARE (*Troilus and Cressida* III. 2.)

1609.

### LOVE CELESTIAL

My praise shall be dedicated to the happiest  
state of mind, to the noblest affection. I shall  
teach lovers to love, that have all this while  
loved by rote. I shall give them the alphabet  
of love.

BACON (*Conference of Pleasure*) 1591-1592.

Sweet Love devoid of villainy or ill,  
But pure and spotless as at first he sprung  
Out of th' Almighty's bosom where he nests,  
From thence infused into mortal breasts.  
Such high conceit of that celestial fire  
The base born brood of blindness cannot guess,  
Nor ever dare their dunghill thoughts aspire  
Unto so lofty pitch of perfectness.

SPENSER (*Tears of the Muses*) 1611.

'Tis rather to instruct deceived mankind  
How much pure Love, that has his birth in  
[Heaven,  
And scorns to be received a guest but in  
A noble heart prepared to entertain him,  
Is, by the gross misprision of weak men,  
Abused and injured ; that celestial fire,  
Which.....

MASSINGER (*Parliament of Love*) 1624.

Most sacred fire that burnest mightily  
In living breasts is kindled first above  
Amongst the eternal spheres and lamping sky,  
And thence poured into men which men call  
[Love,

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

Not that same which doth base affections move  
In brutish minds and filthy lust inflame,  
But that sweet fit that doth true beauty love  
And chooseth virtue for his dearest dame,  
Whence spring all noble deeds and neverdying  
[fame.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* III. III.) 1590-1609.

What thing is love? It is a power divine  
That reigns in us . . . .  
He that hath the feeling taste of Love  
Derives his essence from no earthly toy.

GREENE (*Menaphon*) 1589.

No mortal passion, but a supernatural influence.

IBID (*Morando*) 1587.

Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove :  
O, no ! it is an ever-fixéd mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height  
[be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and  
[cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come ;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

SHAKESPEARE (*Sonnet* CXVI.) 1609.

Love is not love unless love doth perséver,  
That love is perfect love that loves for ever.

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess* II. 3.) 1613.

In their threefold treatment of Love as *creeping*, a *madness* and a *Celestial* influence, Bacon and the dramatists are all equally consistent in

## MISCELLANEOUS SIMILITUDES

their inconsistencies. It is a popular impression that Bacon knew nothing about this subject, but he himself thought differently. "I shall," says he, "teach lovers to love." This passage occurs in the *Conference of Pleasure* forming one of the pieces contained in the Northumberland House Manuscript discussed in the preceding chapter. Mr. Edwin Reed notes some very remarkable parallelisms between this MS. and Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. I conclude this chapter by quoting them.

SHAKESPEARE (circa  
1591-2.)

*Love gives to every power  
a double power.*

*Love is first learned in a  
woman's eyes.*

Is not *love* a *Hercules* ?

Love... with the *motion*  
of *all* elements.

But for my *love*... where  
*nothing wants*, that want  
itself doth seek.

They here stand martyrs,  
slain in Cupid's *wars*.

BACON (circa 1591-2)

*Love gives the mind power  
to exceed itself.*

The *eye*, where *love* begin-  
*neth*.

What fortune can be such  
a *Hercules* [as *love*] ?

*Love* is the *motion* that  
animateth *all* things.

When we *want nothing*,  
there is the reason and  
the opportunity and  
the spring of *love*.

Lovers never thought  
their profession suffi-  
ciently graced till they  
had compared it to  
a *warfare*.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

Bacon, who acquired his knowledge of Natural History less from experience than from books, refers in his *Apophthegms* to "the King in a hive of bees." This is an error probably derived from Virgil. It is now a matter of common knowledge that bees have no king, but a *queen*. The dramatists sound a similar false note.

The honey bees.... have a King.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry V.* I. 2.) 1600.

The bees swarm to preserve the king of bees.

LYLY (*Midas* III. 1.) 1592.

A peaceful King [of bees].

DAY (*Parliament of Bees* I.) 1641.

Their King [of bees].

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Elder Brother*  
I. 1.) 1637.

In the *Advancement of Learning* (1603-5) Bacon writes: "Is not the opinion of Aristotle worthy to be recorded wherein he saith that young men are no fit auditors of *moral* philosophy?" This is another slip. Aristotle refers to *political* not *moral* philosophy; nevertheless, Shakespeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher similarly misquote him.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

Young men whom Aristotle thought unfit to hear *moral* philosophy.

SHAKESPEARE (*Troilus and Cressida*. II. 2.) 1609.

And as the tutor to great Alexander [*i. e.* Aristotle] would say ; a young man should not dare to read his *moral* books, till after five and twenty.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Valentinian*, I. I.)  
1619-1647.

Although permeated with the wisdom of the ancients, strangely enough we find the dramatists referring to the Hesperides, not as Nymphs, but as the name of a place !

Still climbing trees in the Hesperides.

SHAKESPEARE (*Love's Labour's Lost* IV. 3.) 1598.

Seated beyond the sea of Tripoly  
And richer than the plot Hesperides.

GREENE (*Orlando Furioso*) 1571-1594.

Here grows the garden of Hesperides.

DEKKER (*Old Fortunatus* III. 2.) 1600.

The precious fruit kept by the dragon in Hesperides.

DRAYTON (*Endymion and Phæbe*)

When Hercules had killed the flaming dragon of Hesperida.

ANON (*Lingua* IV. 5.) 1607.

Not only did the playwrights make identical errors, but they were concordant in their sense of humour. To instance a few cases ; Shakespeare in *Henry IV* likens the glow of Bardolph's nose to an " *ignis fatuus*."

If I did not think thou hadst been an *ignis*

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

*fatuus*, or a ball of wild fire, there's no purchase in money.

(Pt. I. III. 3.) 1598.

The anonymous and unknown author of the early version of *Timon* (1600?) has the same ultra pedantic sally.

I fear that shining *ignis fatuus* which the lamp of thy nose doth bear about.

Almost all the dramatists had a little trick of cutting short conversation by picking up some unimportant word thus :—

Uncle me no uncles.

SHAKESPEARE.

Virgin me no virgins.

MASSINGER.

Parish me no parishes.

PEELE.

Private me no privates.

HEYWOOD.

Plat me no platforms.

ANON (*Arden of Feversham*).

Fine me no fines.

DEKKER.

Front me no fronts.

FORD.

Heart me no hearts.

PORTER.

Star me no stars.

DAY.

Plot me no plots.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER.

Good me no goods.

MARSTON.



## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

I have not met with this mannerism in the writings of Bacon; but it is recorded that when the Earl of Essex was suing on behalf of Bacon for the place of Attorney General, he cut short Cecil's suggestion that a less important office might be "of easier digestion to the queen," with the interruption, "Digest me no digestions, the Attorneyship for Francis is that I must have."

### TRAGEDY, COMEDY, HISTORY.

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited.

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet* II. 2.) 1603.

Is't comedy, tragedy, pastoral, moral, nocturnal, or history?

MARSTON (*Ind. What You Will*) 1607.

We are, sir, comedians, tragedians, tragicomedians, comi-tragedians, pastorists, humourists, clownists, satirists.

MIDDLETON (*Mayor of Quinborough* v. 1.) 1661.

### LATE - EARLY

It is not now late but early.

BACON (*Essay, Death* II.)

Not to be abed after midnight is to be up betimes.

SHAKESPEARE (*Twelfth Night* II. 3.) 1623.

Your lordship went but late to bed last night.  
'Twas early in the morning.

SHIRLEY (*Lady of Pleasure* I. 1.) 1635-1637.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

*Audrey.* You keep sweet hours Master Dampit,  
We were all abed three hours ago. . . .

*Dampit.* Do you use to go to bed so early Audrey ?

*A.* Call you this early Master Dampit ?

*D.* Why is't not one o'clock in the morning,  
Is not that early enough ?

MIDDLETON (*Trick to Catch The Old One*  
III. 4.) 1607-1608.

## MAD ENGLISH

To few doubtless would he seem mad therein  
because the majority of men are mad.

BACON (*Promus*) 1594-6.

Why was he sent into England ?

Why ? Because he was mad....

'Twill not be seen in him there

There the men are as mad as he.

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet* II. 2.) 1603.

Your lordship shall ever find.... amongst a  
hundred Englishmen fourscore and ten mad-  
men.

MARSTON (*Malcontent* III. I.) 1604.

(*The ENGLISH SLAVE practices his postures.*)

This fellow's mad, stark mad.

Believe they are all so :

I have sold a hundred of them.

A strange nation !

MASSINGER (*A Very Woman* III. I.) 1634-1655.

How comes this English madman here ?

Alas ! that is no question ;

They are mad everywhere Sir.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*The Pilgrim*)  
1621-1647.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

On the cover of the Northumberland House Manuscript there appears the remarkable word *Honorificabilitudine*. A variant of this strange decasyllable was popular among the dramatists.

Thou art not so long *by the head* as *Honorificabilitudinitatibus*.

SHAKESPEARE (*Love's Labour's Lost* v. 1.) 1598.

And *Honorificabilitudinitatibus* thrust out o' the kingdom *by the head* and shoulders.

BEAUMONT and FLETCHER (*Mad Lover*  
I. I.) 1619-1647.

Physicians deafen our ears with the *Honorificabilitudinitatibus* of their heavenly *panachæa*.

NASH (*Lenten Stuffle*) 1599.

His discourse is like the long word *Honorificabilitudinitatibus*, a great deal of sound and no sense.

MARSTON (*Dutch Courtezan* v.) 1605.

It is related by Bacon that his uncle " Lord Treasurer Burleigh used to say when laying aside his official robe at the close of his days work, ' Lie there, Lord Treasurer. ' " (*Apophthegms*) Although this anecdote was not made public until twenty years after Shakespeare's death we find the following in *The Tempest*.

Lend thy hand and pluck my magic garment from me, — so ;

(*Lays down his mantle*)

Lie there my art !

(Act I. Sc. 2.) 1623.

John Ford apparently knew this same story. In *The Lover's Melancholy* we have it thus :—

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

There lies my gravity (*Throws off his gown.*)  
(Act I. Sc. 2.) 1629.

A third instance occurs in the anonymous manuscript play *Timon of Athens*. (1600?)

*Timon.* Much hayle, Hermogenes,  
Saue yee, philosophers....  
Y'are welcome all : spende yee this day in mirthe,  
Mixe laughter and conceits with this our feaste,  
And lay aside all graue seueritie.

*Stilpo.* There lie, philosopher. I put off all formalities, excentricall and concentricall uniuersalities, before the thinge, in the thinge, and after the thinge, specifications categorematicall and syncategorematicall, hæcceities complete and ἀπλῶς, or incomplete and κατὰ τι.

*Gel.* Ha, ha, he ! hee seemes like a dry heringe.

Although there are no stage directions to that effect, it is obvious that to the words, "There lie, philosopher" *Stilpo* throws off his gown. We have learnt from a previous stage instruction that the philosophers enter "in gownes."

Another of the family witticisms reappears in Shakespeare's lines :

Hang hog is Latin for Bacon I warrant you.  
(*Merry Wives* IV. 1.) 1602-1623.

The key to this story is told in Bacon's *Apophthegms* published to the world forty eight years after the passage in *The Merry Wives* was written.

A culprit, on trial for his life before Sir Nicholas Bacon, desired his mercy on account of kindred. "Prithee," said my lord judge, "how comes that in?" "Why, if it please you my lord,

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

your name is Bacon and mine Hog, and in all ages Hog and Bacon have been so near kindred that they are not to be separated." "Ay, but," replied Bacon, "you and I cannot be kindred, except you be hanged, for Hog is not Bacon until it be well hanged."

There are certain well worn jests which have done public service since the Deluge, but these are not of that class. Conspicuous among witticisms to which the dramatists were prone was a play of words upon the musical terms, *treble, mean, and bass*; another, in connection with the philosophers stone; a third was dialogue—or rather monologue with unseen Echo. Thus:—

*Academico.* (*Solus*) Fain would I have a living if I could tell how to come by it.

*Echo.* Buy it.

*Acad.* Buy it, fond Echo; why thou dost greatly mistake it.

*Echo.* Stake it.

*Acad.* Stake it, what shall I stake at this game of Simony.

*Echo.* Money.

And so on for a whole scene. The fragment quoted is from the anonymous *Return from Parnassus* i. 2. (1602-1606); but, Peele, Heywood, Dekker, and Webster have precisely similar scenes. In their fondness for echos the dramatists seem to have been on a par with Bacon, of whom Macaulay states, "While still a mere child he stole away from his playfellows to a vault in St. James Fields for the purpose of investigating the cause of a singular Echo which he had observed there." That the subject engaged his attention throughout

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

life is manifest from his references to it in *Sylva Sylvarum*.

Shakespeare, when occasion necessitated, had a wondrous and exhaustless flow of invective. As Professor Meiklejohn observes, "There is no limit to Shakespeare's power of calling names." The minor dramatists shared and enjoyed a similar gift; see, for example Middleton:

*Dampit.* Out, you gernative quean, the mullipood of villainy, the spinner of concupiscency! .... Out, you babliaminy, you unfeathered, cremitoried quean, you cullisance of scabiosity!

*Audrey.* Good words, Master Dampit, to speak before a maid and a virgin! Sweet terms! my mistress shall know 'em.

(*Trick to Catch the Old One* III. 5.) 1607-1608.

In their fondness for metaphors the dramatists were as unanimous as they were singular in the choice of subjects, and the meanings which they infused whether into muck, scarabs, pleurisies, chameleons, or imposthumes, are, nearly invariably, identical. Probably never before or since were such prosaic and repellent subjects promoted to such elevated and poetic service.

### WOMEN: BURRS

Women are like burrs; where their affection throws them, there they'll stick.

WEBSTER (*White Devil* v. 1.) 1607-1612.

Most of the women .... stick on like burrs.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*The Custom of the Country* IV. 4.) 1628-1647.

She ... hangs on me like a burr.

PEELE (*Old Wives' Tale*) 1595.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

As I am a lady, you shall not go!  
I told him what a burr he had gotten.

CHAPMAN, JONSON & MARSTON (*Eastward Ho!*  
II. I.) 1605.

*Hang off* thou burr!

SHAKESPEARE (*Midsummer Night's Dream*) 1600.

Away, you burr .... *hang off* flesh-hook!

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Wit at Severa.*  
*Weapons* II. I.) 1605 ?-1647.

Away burrs!

FORD (*The Fancies* IV. I.) 1638.

## SCARABS

The scarab flies over many a sweet flower and  
lights in a cowshard.

GOSSON (*School of Abuse*) 1579.

Yonder scarab that lived upon the dung  
of her base pleasures.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Thierry* II. I.) 1621.

Battening like scarabs in the dung of peace.

MASSINGER (*Duke of Milan* III. I.) 1623.

## THE BRAIN A FORGE

There is shaped a tale in a lewd forge that  
beats apace at this time that I should deliver  
an opinion to the Queen in the Lord of Essex's  
cause.

BACON (Letter to LORD HENRY SOMERSET.)

In the quick forge and working-house of  
thought.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry v.* pro. v.) 1600.

Hate and *revenge* are *hammering* in my brain.

IBID (*Titus Andronicus.*) 1594-1600.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

Sleep is far unfit  
For such as still have *hammering* in their heads,  
But only hope of honour and *revenge*.

GREENE (*Orlando Furioso*) 1594-1599.

Now am I for some five and fifty reasons,  
hammering, *hammering revenge*.

BEN JONSON (*Every Man in his humour* III. 3.)

1598-1601.

What new design is hammering in his head  
now ?

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Wife for a Month* I. I.)

1624-1647.

Unprincipally thoughts do hammer in my head.

CHAPMAN (*Alphonsus* IV. 3.) 1654.

## THE LAPWING

This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet* I. I.) 1603.

Forward lapwing ! he flies with the shell on's  
[head.

WEBSTER (*White Devil*) 1607-1612.

Boldness enforces youth to ... run forth like  
Lapwings from their warm nest, part of the  
Shell yet sticking unto their downy heads.

CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* II. I.) 1654.

Far from her nest the lapwing cries away.

SHAKESPEARE (*Comedy of Errors* IV. 2.) 1623.

You resemble the lapwing who crieth most  
where her nest is not.

LYLY (*Campaspe* II. I.) 1582-1584.

Like the lapwing.... will follow him with yelling  
and false cries.

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1592-1600.



## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

Trust not his oath ;  
He will be like a lapwing when she flies  
Far from her sought nest.

CHAPMAN (*Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* v. 1.)  
1613.

Like to the lapwing have you all this while  
With your false love deluded me.

ROWLEY, FORD & DEKKER (*Witch of Edmonton*  
II. 2.) 1658.

H'as the lapwing's cunning I am afraid my lord,  
That cries most when she's farthest from the nest.

MIDDLETON, ROWLEY & MASSINGER (*The Old*  
*Law* v. 2.) 1656.

Excellent, excellent lapwing ! ....  
He sings and beats his wings far from his nest.

WEBSTER (*Appius and Virginia* I. 1.) 1654.

### THE CHAMELEON

Some that have kept chameleons a whole  
year together could never perceive that they  
fed upon anything but air.

BACON (*Sylva Sylvarum*) 1626.

If the chameleon be laid upon green, the  
green predominates ; if upon yellow, the yellow ;  
laid upon black he looketh all black.

*Ibid.*

Observe you this chameleon, my lords ?  
I'll make him change his colour presently.

WEBSTER (*Ap. & Virginia* III. 2.) 1639-1654.

Fortune, (who is like the chameleon) variable  
with every object and constant in nothing but  
inconstancy.

LODGE (*Rosalynde*) 1590.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

Love is a chameleon which draweth nothing into the mouth but air.

LYLY (*Endymion* III. 4.) 1591.

The chameleon Love can feed on the air.

SHAKESPEARE (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* II. 1.)

1623.

They be pure chameleons that feed only upon air.

ANON (*Lingua* IV. 1.) 1607.

(*Kisses her*) Thus to live, chameleon like, I could resign my essence. [soul].

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*The Sea Voyage*

II. 1.) 1622-1647.

Like a chameleon sucked the air of misery.

IBID (*The Spanish Curate* IV. 5.) 1622-1647.

### A SEA OF—

Hamlet's expression a "sea of troubles" has caused the commentators some perplexity. Pope supposed it to be a typographical error and proposed to substitute *siege*. Others have suggested *assail*, but sea—a Greek classicism—obviously is correct.

Sea of troubles.

SHAKESPEARE (*Hamlet*)

Sea of troubles.

DEKKER (*Wonder of a Kingdom*)

Sea of tears.

MARLOWE (*Tamburlaine* Pt. 2.)

Seas of miseries.

MARSTON (*Sophonisba*)

Sea of sorrow.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen*)

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

Sea of danger.

MASSINGER (*The Picture*)

Sea of poison.

PEELE (*David and Bathsheba*)

Sea of lover's rage.

DEKKER (*Honest Whore*)

Sea of lust.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Philaster*)

Sea of blissful joy.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen*)

Sea of pleasure and content.

HEYWOOD (*Wise Woman*)

Seas of pleasure.

MARSTON (*Insatiate Countess*)

Ocean of sweetmeats.

MIDDLETON (*Spanish Gypsy*)

Sea of multitude.

BACON (*Apophthegms*)

Writing to Essex in 1597, Bacon accounts "these accidents to be like the fish remora which, though it be not great, yet hath a hidden property to hinder the sailing of the ship," and in the *Advancement of Learning* (1605) he again writes, "They are indeed but remoras and hindrances to stay and slug the ship from further sailing." This fish remora — one of the tropical suckerfish family<sup>31</sup> — was a favourite metaphor with the dramatists.

Equally popular was a simile of the Mind in travail.

I have mischief within my breast, more than  
my bulk can hold ; I want a midwife to deliver it.

KYD (*Jeronimo* I. 3.) 1588-1605.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

Help me to be delivered of this embryo  
that lies tumbling in my brain.

DEKKER (*Gull's Horn Book*) 1609.

I have a young conception in my brain.  
Be you my Time to bring it to some shape.

SHAKESPEARE (*Troilus & Cressida* 1. 3.) 1609.

My head labours with the pangs of delivery.

MARMION (*Antiquary* III.) 1641.

I am in labor to deliver to you [a weighty  
secret].

MASSINGER (*Duke of Milan* IV. 3.) 1623.

My desire feels many throes of travail, 'till  
deliver'd of its sweet issue.

NABBES (*Microcosmos* III.) 1637.

Himself, whose mind did travail as with child.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* IV. 9.) 1590.

The noble heart that harbours virtuous thought.  
And is with child of glorious great intent.

IBID.

It is a coincidence that the preliminary draft of Bacon's project to renovate all arts and sciences and to sweep away the formulas of sham learning, was entitled "The Greatest Birth of Time." Writing in 1626 on the ardour and constancy with which he had clung to his aim—"in that purpose my mind never waxed old, in that long interval of time it never cooled"—he observes that it was then "forty years since" (i. e. *circa* 1586?) he "put together a youthful essay on these matters, which, with vast confidence, I called by the high sounding title, The Greatest Birth of Time."

Anyone familiar with the works of Bacon will

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

recognize his extraordinary fondness for metaphors drawn from the functions of reproduction.

"The Greatest Birth of Time," whatever it was, has perished, but according to Dean Church "in very truth the child was born, and, as Bacon says, for forty years grew and developed."<sup>1</sup>

The early editions of *The Advancement of Learning* have as frontispieces the picture of a ship sailing beyond the Pillars of Hercules. "Books," says Bacon, "are to be valued like ships which pass through the vast ocean of time and convey knowledge to remote ages." "The sciences," he adds, "seem to have their Hercules Pillars which bound the desires and hopes of mankind." "Why," he asks, "should a few favourite authors stand up like Hercules' Columns to bar further sailing and discovery?" and again, "How long shall we let a few received authors stand up like Hercules' Columns beyond which there shall be no sailing or discovery in science?"

That he regarded himself as a solitary and adventurous seafarer is obvious from his introduction to *The Great Instauration*. "Human Knowledge," he asserts, is not well put together nor justly formed, hence "there is no other course left but with better assistance to begin the work anew and raise or rebuild the sciences, arts, and all human knowledge from a firm and solid basis." In this experiment "almost too bold and astonishing to obtain credit" he is not ignorant that he "*stands alone*," yet, he continues, he "thought it not right to desert either the cause or himself, but to boldly enter on the way and explore." He

<sup>1</sup> Bacon p. 180.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

concludes with the words, "Uncertain, however, whether these reflections would occur to another and observing that he had never met any person disposed to apply his mind to similar thoughts, he determined to publish whatsoever he found time to perfect. Nor is this the haste of ambition, but anxiety, that if he should die there might remain behind him some outline and determination of the matter his mind had embraced, as well as some mark of his sincere and earnest affection to promote the happiness of mankind."

There were, however, other men, seemingly all unknown to Bacon, who, simultaneously, were applying their minds to a similar outline and determination. One of these was the anonymous author who wrote some time about 1600 the unpublished play *Timon* from which I have made so many quotations. This manuscript, now lying in the Dyce collection, was printed for the first time by the Shakespere Society in 1842.<sup>1</sup> It contains the following passage:—

I with my right hand touch't the very clouds.  
Devouring gulfs nor quicksands of the sea  
Did e'er fright me. At Cadiz I wash't away  
*Non ultra* writ with Hercules' own hand.

"Like Columbus," says Mr John M. Robertson of Bacon, "he was the hero of an Idea and like so many heroes of fabulous quests he bore a magic sword, to wit, his unrivalled [*in what respect "unrivalled" ?*] powers of speech.

"There had," says Dean Church, "been nothing to compare in ardour of love, with Bacon's

<sup>1</sup> It is now obtainable in Cassell's National Library bound up with Shakespeare's *Timon*.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

audacious scheme. It was the presence and the power of a great idea." <sup>1</sup> In 1594 however, eleven years before the publication of Bacon's 'unrivalled' and 'incomparable' *Advancement of Learning*, Michael Drayton published sixty-three sonnets entitled "IDEA," and I am driven to think that between these and Bacon's "Idea" there is some unsuspected relation. In order to emphasize the identities of sentiment and determination, I place side by side passages from the "ideas" of the two writers.

### DRAYTON

Like an adventurous  
seafarer am I,  
Who hath some long  
and dangerous  
voyage been,  
And call'd to tell of  
his discovery,  
How far he sail'd,  
what countries he  
had seen,  
Proceeding from the  
port whence he  
put forth,  
Shows by *his compass*  
how his course he  
steer'd ;  
When east, when  
west, when south,  
and when by  
north,

### BACON

We have committed ourselves to doubtful, difficult, and solitary ways ; and relying on the Divine assistance, have supported our minds against the vehemence of opinions, our own internal doubts and scruples, and the darkness and fantastic images of the mind ; that at length we might make more sure and certain discoveries for the benefit of posterity. .... In former ages, when men at sea, directing their course solely by the observation of the stars, might coast along the shores of the continent, but could not trust themselves to the wide ocean, or discover new worlds, until the

1 *Bacon* p. 201.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

As how the pole to  
every place was  
rear'd,

What capes he  
doubled, of what  
continent,

The gulfs and straits  
that strangely he  
had past,

Where most be-  
calm'd, where  
with foul weather  
spent,

And on what rocks  
in peril to be cast :

Thus in my love,  
time calls me to  
relate

My tedious travels  
and oft-varying  
fate.

(*Sonnet I.*)

Calling to mind  
since first my love  
begun,

The uncertain times  
oft varying in  
their course,

use of *the compass* was known :  
even so...

(*Great Instauration : Preface.*)

We have with a small bark,  
such as we were able to set  
out, sailed about the univer-  
sal circumference, as well of  
the old as the new World of  
Sciences, with how prosperous  
winds and course, we leave  
to posterity to judge.— (*Ad-  
vancement of Learning, Bk.  
IX.*)

We have finished our small  
globe of the intellectual world  
with all the exactness we  
could, marking out and des-  
cribing those parts of it which  
we find either *not constantly  
inhabited* or not sufficiently  
cultivated.<sup>1</sup>— (*Ibid*)

1 This Navigation metaphor seems to have been in Shake-  
speare's mind when he referred to having "sounded all the depths  
and shoals of honour". Compare also Dekker, "In this black  
shore of mischief have I sailed along, and been a faithful dis-  
coverer of all the creeks, rocks, gulfs, and quicksands in and  
about it" (*Bellman of London* 1608) "I will sail desperately and  
boldly along the shore of the Isle of Gulls and... make a true  
discovery of their wild (yet *habitable*) country." (*Gull's Horn Book*, 1609.)



## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

How things still  
unexpectedly have  
run,

As't please the Fates  
by their resistless  
force :

Lastly, mine eyes  
amazedly have  
seen

Essex' great fall,  
'Tyrone his peace  
to gain,

The quiet end of  
that long-living  
Queen,

This King's fair en-  
trance, and our  
peace with Spain,

We and the Dutch  
at length our-  
selves to sever ;

Thus the world doth  
and evermore  
shall reel ;

Yet to my Goddess am  
*I constant ever,*

*Howe'er blind For-  
tune turn her giddy  
wheel :*

*Though heaven and  
earth prove both to  
me untrue*

*Yet am I still inviolate  
to you,*

*In that purpose my mind  
never waxed old, in that long  
interval of time it never cooled.*

(Quoted in Church's *Bacon*  
but no reference given.)  
1626.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

In pride of wit, when  
high desire of  
fame  
Gave life and cour-  
age to my labour-  
ing pen,  
And first the sound  
and virtue of my  
name  
Won grace and  
credit in the ears  
of men ;  
With those the  
thronged theatres  
that press,  
I in the circuit for  
the laurel strove:  
Where the full  
praise, I freely  
must confess,  
In heat of blood a  
modest mind  
might move,  
With shouts and  
claps at every little  
pause  
When the proud  
round on every  
side hath rung,  
Sadly I sit unmov'd  
with the applause,  
As though to me it  
nothing did be-  
long :

For myself, my heart is not  
set upon any of those things  
which depend upon external  
accidents. I am not hunting  
for fame : I have no desire to  
found a sect, after the fashion  
of heresiarchs ; and to look  
for any private gain from such  
an undertaking as this, I count  
both ridiculous and base.  
Enough for me the conscious-  
ness of well-deserving, and  
those real and effectual results  
with which Fortune itself  
cannot interfere.

*(Proem to Great Instauration)*

The same humility that we  
practice in learning the same  
we also observe in teaching  
without endeavouring to stamp  
a dignity on any of our inven-  
tions.— *(Preface, Great Instauration)*

It is enough to me that I  
have sown unto Posterity  
and the Immortal God.

*(Conclusion, Advancement of Learning)*

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

*No public glory vainly  
I pursue,  
All that I seek is to  
eternise you.*

(XLVII.)

Whilst thus my pen  
strives to eternise  
thee,  
*Age rules my lines  
with wrinkles in my  
face,*  
Where, in the map  
of all my misery,  
Is modell'd out the  
world of my dis-  
grace ;  
Whilst in despair of  
tyrannising times,  
Medea-like, I make  
thee young again,  
Proudly thou  
scorn'st my world-  
out-wearing rhy-  
mes,  
And murderest  
virtue with thy  
coy disdain :  
And though in  
youth my youth  
untimely perish,  
To keep thee from  
oblivion and the  
grave,  
Ensuing ages yet

I was not without hope (the condition of religion being at that time not very prosperous) that if I came to hold office in the State, I might get something done too for the good of men's souls. When I found, however, that my zeal was mistaken for ambition, and *my life had already reached the turning-point, and my breaking health* reminded me how ill I could afford to be so slow, and I reflected moreover that in leaving undone the good that I could do myself alone, and applying myself to that which could not be done without the help and consent of others, I was by no means discharging the duty that lay upon me,— I put all those thoughts aside, and (in pursuance of my old determination) betook myself wholly to this work.

(*Proem Great Instauration*)

(Spedding's translation.)

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

my rhymes shall cherish, When I entomb'd my better part shall save ; And though this earthly body fade and die, My name shall mount upon eter- nity.	After my death I may yet perhaps through the kindling of this new light in the dark- ness of philosophy be the means of making this age famous to posterity. ( <i>Dedi : Novum Organum.</i> )
--	---

(XLIV)

Among these same IDEA sonnets we find the *scarab* metaphor.

Up to my pitch no common judgment flies  
I scorn all earthly dung bred scarabies.

And the simile of the Brain a Forge :

My heart the anvil where my thoughts do beat,  
My words the hammers, fashioning my desire,  
My breast the forge, including all the heat,  
Love is the fuel which maintains the fire.

Also the idea that human brutes were to be tamed by the insinuating sweetness of poetical philosophy.

Oh, why should Nature niggardly restrain  
That foreign nations relish not our tongue !  
Else should my lines glide on the waves of Rhine,  
And crown the Pyrens with my living song :  
But bounded thus, to Scotland get you forth,  
Thence take you wing unto the Orcades,  
There let my verse get glory in the North,  
Making my sighs to thaw the frozen seas :

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

And let the bards within that Irish isle,  
To whom my Muse with fiery wings shall pass,  
Call back the stiffneck'd rebels from exile,  
And mollify the slaughtering galliglass ;  
And when my flowing numbers they rehearse,  
Let wolves and bears be charmed with my verse.

The relations between the dramatists and Bacon seem to have been systematically most intimate and subtle ; I will give one more case in point. In or about the year 1594 Bacon, discouraged by fruitless applications for employment, wrote to his friend Fulke Greville : —

“ What though the Master of the Rolls, and my Lord of Essex, and yourself think my case without doubt, yet in the meantime I have a hard condition, to stand so that whatsoever service I do to her Majesty, it shall be thought to be but *servitium viscatum*, *lime-twigs* and fetches to place myself ; and so I shall have envy, not thanks. This is a course to quench all good spirits, and to corrupt every man's nature ;... I am weary of it ; as also of wearying my good friends. ”

In the same year (1594), there was published an anonymous play *The Spanish Tragedy*, subsequently attributed to Thomas Kyd. Simultaneously with Bacon “ this penny-a-liner Kyd ” (I quote this expression from Marlowes apologist Mr C. W. Ingram) was passing through an identical phase of emotions which he expressed as follows :—

This fits our former policy,  
And thus experience bids the wise to deal ;  
I lay the plot, he prosecutes the point ;  
I set the trap, he breaks the worthless *twigs*  
And sees not that wherewith the bird was *limed*.

## ERROR, WIT AND METAPHOR

Thus hopeful men that mean to hold their own  
Must look like fowlers to their dearest friends.

(*Spanish Tragedy* III. 4.) 1594.<sup>1</sup>

The accordancé here is highly remarkable. Bacon, a hopeful man desiring to hold his own, lays the plot by looking to and soliciting his dearest friends ; they prosecute his point, but Bacon fears that Her Majesty will perceive the *limed twigs*.

<sup>1</sup> I have been surprised on correcting these pages for the press to perceive what a large proportion of the passages quoted are assignable to the year 1594, see especially pages 118 and 307. In this year not only was the princely intellect of Francis Bacon fretting at its enforced idleness but the *scriptorium* at Twickenham seems equally to have been in want of occupation, see *ante* p. 243.

## CHAPTER XIV

### TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

Carlyle observes of Shakespeare, "His works are so many windows through which we see a glimpse of the world that was in him." Applying this axiom to the Elizabethan drama in general we perceive that the dramatists had a personality in common. Further, that distinction between the plebeian Dramatic Soul of the playwrights and the patrician Philosophic Soul of Francis Bacon is, so far as we can judge, non-existent. In whims, sympathies and antipathies the accord is to the minutest detail and the faintest nuance. To Cosmetics, Funeral rites, Beer, Money, Wealth, Landed possessions, Aristotle, and the 'beastly plebeians' their scathing hostility has already been noted and I will here instance a few more similar cases.

"Guard," says Bacon, "against a melancholy and *stubborn silence*, for this either turns the fault upon you, or impeaches your inferior."<sup>1</sup> In the Drama *stubborn silence* generally, if not invariably, spells Disaster. "I am resolved," says Massinger, "to put on an obstinate silence." The consequence is a fatal stab to the words,

<sup>1</sup> *Advancement of Learning*. 1605.

## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

“Break, *stubborn silence*.”<sup>1</sup> In Marston’s *Sophonisba* an unhappy character is haled up and down by the hair to the words, “Break, *stubborn silence*.”<sup>2</sup> In the *Taming of the Shrew* Katherine exclaims, “Her *silence* flouts me... I’ll be revenged.” She then “flies after Bianca” — an exit conventionally followed by a crash.

The dramatists had a conspicuous and violent aversion to garlic.

### GARLIC.

Hence! I am qualmish at the smell of leek.  
SHAKESPEARE (*Henry V.* IV. I.) 1600.

Eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath.

IBID (*Midsummer Night’s Dream* IV. 2.) 1600.

Aye, but the garlic I doubt not will make your breath stink.

ANON (*Taming of a Shrew*) 1594.

I have no leeks or garlic at my table...

Foh! How he stinks of garlic.

ANON (*Timon* v.) 1600.

He that eats garlic on that morning shall be a rank knave till night.

CHAPMAN (*Monsieur d’Olive*) IV. I.) 1606.

Come hither, and hold your fan between.

You have eaten onions.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Wife for a Month* IV. 2.) 1624-1647.

To Beaumont and Fletcher garlic was so distasteful that they flog an eater for his indiscretion.

1 *Guardian* III. 6. 1633.

2 III. 1. 1606.



## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

That knave has eaten garlic, whip him and bring him back.

(*Prophetess* III. 1.) 1622-1647.

Among Bacon's manuscript notes we find the entry *Ne allia comedas et fabas* (Erasmus), "Do not eat garlic and beans." Evidently to Bacon garlic was as pestilent and baneful as to the dramatists. In *Sylva Sylvarum* (1626) he alludes to it as the receptacle for "the more fœtid juice of the earth." It seems in his opinion to have been the very acme of unpleasant flavours; the antithesis of things sweet.

In his love for fragrant air, and hatred of ill odours Bacon was greatly in advance of the stalwart and imperturbable Elizabethan nostril. "None of his servants," says Aubrey, "durst appear before him without Spanish leather boots: for he would smell the neates leather which offended him." Among the articles enumerated in his Will was a silver "casting bottle." It was customary for the supersensitive in those days to carry these scent sprinklers for the purpose of sweetening, or counteracting their surroundings. In his *Essay Of Masques* Bacon lays down that "in such a company as there is steam and heat" the unseen sprinkling of sweet odours is a thing "of great pleasure and refreshment." Not infrequently the dramatists imply strong protest against "steam and heat;" they likewise advocate the sprinkling of sweet odours.

The ushers should have seen this room per-  
[fumed, in faith

They are too negligent.

MACHIN (*Dumb Knight* IV. 1.) 1608.

## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

This room smells !  
It has been perfumed.

DEKKER (*Wonder of a Kingdom* III. I.) 1636.

We have already shewn how repellently the atmosphere of the crowd affected the playwrights.

It is conventional for poetic minds to perceive beauties in the Night. I pick up at random Drummond of Hawthornden and find him apostrophising, "Dear Night, the ease of Care, untroubled seat of Peace, Time's eldest child." Though here and there are favourable passages, the dramatists mostly manifest an implacable dislike for her. To them Night is a child of Hell, brutish, a murderous slut, a foul mother and a grim paramour.

### NIGHT.

Night ! thou foul mother of annoyance sad,  
Sister of heavy Death, and nurse of Woe,  
Which wast begot in heaven, but for thy bad  
And brutish shape thrust down to hell below.

Under thy mantle black there hidden lie  
Light-shunning Theft, and traitorous Intent,  
Abhorred Bloodshed, and vile Felony,  
Shameful Deceit, and Danger imminent,  
Foul Horror, and eke hellish Dreriment.

SPENSER (*The Fairy Queen* Bk. III. c. IV.)

1590-1609.

O comfort-killing Night, image of Hell,  
Dun registrar and notary of shame,  
Black stage for tragedies and murders fell,  
Vast sin concealing chaos, nurse of blame.

SHAKESPEARE (*Lucrece*) 1594.

## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

Night, the coverer of accursed crime.

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* IV. 4.) 1594.

Dark Night, dread Night, *the silence of the Night*  
*Wherein the Furies mask* in Hellish troops.

ANON (*Contention* Pt. I.) 1594.

*The silent deeps of dead-sad Night, where sins*  
*do mask* unseen.

KYD (*Cornelia* II.) 1594.

*The silence of the speechless Night,*  
Dire architect of murders and misdeeds.

PEELE (*Alcazar*) 1594.

Night is a murderous Slut.

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* III. 12<sup>a</sup>.) 1594.

Hellish night.

ANON (*Lochrine* V. 4.) 1594.

Horrid night, the child of Hell.

SHAKESPEARE (*Henry V.* IV. I.) 1600.

Hell-born night.

ANON (*Lingua* III. 6.) 1607.

Cynthia's.... negro paramour, grim Night.

DEKKER (*Old Fortunatus* I. I.) 1600.

Farewell black night, thou beauteous mistress  
of a murderer !

TOURNEUR (*Atheist's Tragedy* II. 4.) 1611.

They almost invariably associated night and  
*iron rust*, thus : —

Darkness dulled with *iron rust*.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* VI. III.) 1590.

Dusky Night in *rusty iron* car.

MARLOWE (*Edward II.*) 1593-1598.

## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

The *rusty* coach of Night.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida*. IV.) 1602.

Our *iron* chariot, that from his shod wheels  
*rusty* darkness flings.

HEYWOOD (*Silver Age* III.) 1612-1613.

They revel in the splendid simile of sable  
*wings* :—

The night begins with sable wings  
To overcloud the brightness of the Sun.

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* II. 4.) 1594.

The wings of night spread o'er me like a  
sable hearse cloth.

SHIRLEY (*The Cardinal* v. 3.) 1641-1652.

The dragon wing of night o'erspreads the earth.

SHAKESPEARE (*Troilus & Cressida* v. 8.) 1609.

The gloomy wing of night begins to stretch  
Her lazy pinion.

MARSTON (*Antonio* IV. 5.) 1602.

Black Night has stretched her gloomy limbs.  
And laid her head upon some mountain top.

FALKLAND (*Marriage Night* I.) 1664.

At other times *curtains* supersede *wings* : —

The curtain of the night is overspread.

GREENE (*Perimedes*) 1588.

Darksome night.... displayed,  
Her coalblack curtain over brightest sky.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* I.IV.XLIV.) 1590.

Night had shadowed all the Earth  
With sable curtains.

ANON (*King John*) 1591.

The gloomy curtain of the night is spread.

MARSTON (*Scourge of Villainy*) 1599.

## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

Under the close curtains of the night.

TOURNEUR (*Atheist's Tragedy* IV. 3.) 1611-1612.

He draws night's curtains.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Elder Brother* IV. 2.)  
1637.

In all these allusions to the Night it will be observed how consistently (particularly in the year 1594), the poets fail to perceive anything but gloom and villainy.

Although on occasion the dramatists can be prosier than *Polonius*, in the ordinary course they display a vehement irritation at circumlocution and delay.

Defer no time : delays have dangerous ends.

SHAKESPEARE (1 *Henry VI.* III. 2.) 1623.

Delay is dangerous and procureth harm.

GREENE (*Alphonsus*) 1599.

Dalliance dangereth our lives.

MARLOWE (*Edward II.*) 1593-1598.

I am impatient of delay.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

In great affairs 'tis naught to use delay.

ANON (*Edward III.* I. 1.) 1596.

In this respect again they were in accord with Bacon to whom Law, Constitutional privileges and Theology were but means to certain ends. "If," as J. R. Green remarks, "these ends could be brought about in shorter fashion he saw only pedantry in insisting on more cumbrous means."<sup>1</sup> So fiery was the energy with which Bacon attacked his duties as Lord Chancellor that shortly after his appointment we find him writing : —

<sup>1</sup> *Short History.* p, 439.

## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

“This day I have made even with the business of the Kingdom’s common justice ; not one cause unheard ; not one petition unanswered. And this I think could not be said in our age before. This I speak not out of ostentation but out of gladness when I have done my duty. I know men think I cannot continue if I should oppress myself with business : but that account is made. The duties of life are more than life and if I die now I shall die before the world will be weary of me, which in our times is somewhat rare.

A corollary to this energetic temperament was Bacon’s hatred of superfluous circumstance. In the *Promus* manuscript we find him noting down “Matter of circumstance not of substance” an entry which constantly reappears in his writings.

To use many circumstances ere one come to the matter is wearisome.

BACON (*Essay : Discourse*) 1597-8.

Your brother kindly greets you. *Not to be weary with you*, he’s in prison.

SHAKESPEARE (*Measure for Measure* 1. 5.)

1604-1623.

The dwelling upon them [*ceremonies*] and exalting them above the moon is not only tedious, but doth diminish the faith and credit of him that speaks.

BACON (*Essay : Ceremonies*) 1625.

Long and curious speeches.... prefaces and passages and excusations, and other speeches of reference to the person, are great waste of time.

BACON (*Essay : Despatch*) 1607-12.

## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

Similarly we find the dramatists extolling brevity and deprecating all digressions and swellings of style. It seems to have been a traditional rule of the theatre for all messengers either to break their news by intimating that they will leave circumstance and come to the purpose, or, failing in this respect, to be curtly reminded of the necessity. Of this I give instances.

You ... spend but time to wind about ...  
with circumstance.

SHAKESPEARE (*Merchant of Venice* II.) 1600.

Lets talk quickly. Plague o' this circumstance.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Little French Lawyer*  
IV. 5.) 1620-47.

Your plainness and your shortness please me well.

SHAKESPEARE (*Taming of the Shrew* IV. 4.) 1623.

What means this passionate discourse ?

This peroration with such circumstance ?

IBID (2 *Henry VI.* I. I.) 1623.

What need this circumstance ?

Pray you be direct.

BEN JONSON (*Every man in his Humour* II. I.)  
1598.

Lay aside superfluous *ceremony*, speak, what is it ?

FORD (*Love's Sacrifice* I. I.) 1633.

Leaving formal *circumstance*, proceed, you dally.

IBID (*The Fancies* IV. I.) 1638.

I will break my mind to her without *ceremony*  
[or *circumstance*.

LYLY (*Endymion* I. 3.) 1591.

To be brief and cut off all superfluous circumstance.

HEYWOOD (*English Traveller* III. I.) 1633.

## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

Time cuts off circumstance, I must be brief.

TOURNEUR (*Atheist's Tragedy* I. 4.) 1611-1612.

Haste cuts off circumstance.

MASSINGER (*Great Duke of Florence* IV. 1.)  
1627-1636.

Time not affords to tell each circumstance.

GREENE (*Orlando Furioso*) 1591-1594.

Long circumstance in taking princely leaves

Is more officious than convenient.

GREENE (*James IV.*) 1594-1598.

To leave frivolous circumstances, I pray

You tell signor Lucentio....

SHAKESPEARE (*Taming of the Shrew* V. 1.) 1623.

Not to spend the time in trifling words

Thus stands the case....

KYD (*Spanish Tragedy* II. 1.) 1594.

Not to delay your grace with circumstance.

SHIRLEY (*The Cardinal* V. 1.) 1641.

To be *sententious* not superfluous Sol should  
have....

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1592-1600.

I mean to stand on a *sententious* guard

And without any far fetched circumstance

Quickly unfold mine own opinions.

ANON (*Selimus*) 1594.

Tell me.... without all circumstance.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*King and no King*) 1619.

Ladie, the circumstance is tedious.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* I. 1.) 1602.

To lay aside unnecessary soothing

And not to speed the time in circumstance,

'Tis bruited for a certainty my lord....

ANON (*Edward III.* III. 1.) 1598.



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More circumstance the season intercepts  
This is the sum which briefly I have shown.  
ANON (*King John*) 1591.

I will leave the circumstance and come to the  
[purpose,  
This Romelio is a bastard.

WEBSTER (*Devil's Law Case* IV. 2.) 1623.

Not to abuse your patience noble friends  
Nor hold ye off with tedious circumstance....

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*The Chances* IV. 2.)  
1647.

His Lordship came; and, not to trouble  
your Majesty with circumstances, both their  
Lordships concluded....

BACON (Letter to KING JAMES) 1614.

As you please my lord  
But, to omit all circumstance, you bring  
A challenge to my lord Ascanio.

HABINGDON (*Queen of Arragon* V. 1.) 1640.

My Lord, to omit circumstance, I highly thank you.

CHAPMAN (*Admiral of France* IV.) 1635-1639.

A conspicuous trait of the Elizabethan drama is its universalism. Of Shakespeare Emerson asks, "What point of morals, of manners, of economy, of philosophy, of religion, of taste, of the conduct of life has he not settled?" The dramatists seem to have known everything and to have been animated by the same spirit that prompted Bacon while a mere youth to declare modestly, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province." "Shakespeare," says Schlegel, "unites in his existence the utmost depth, and the most foreign and apparently *irreconcilable* properties subsist in

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him peaceably together." Sir Tobie Matthew noted identically the same peculiarity in his friend Bacon; "I have known a great number whom I much value, many whom I admire, but none who hath so astonished me, and as it were ravished my senses, to see so many and so great parts, which in other men were wont to be *incompatible*, united and that in an eminent degree in one sole person. I know not whether this truth will find easy belief." Dr. Rawley also testifies to the same effect.

Shakespeare's constant use of legal expressions and the knowledge of English Law everywhere displayed in his writings, have led commentators to suppose that he must have spent some part of his time as a lawyer's clerk. Lord Chief Justice Campbell observes that Shakespeare had a deep technical knowledge of the law and an easy familiarity with some of the most abstruse proceedings of English jurisprudence, "Whenever he indulges this propensity he invariably lays down good law." This dramatic knowledge of the law is the more remarkable, as Mullinger in his History of the University of Cambridge asserts, that "The study of Civil Law.... was at this period entering upon a very critical stage of its existance as an academic study. It had as we have seen long been declining." (p. 423.)

Not only Shakespeare, but also the minor dramatists were steeped in Jurisprudence. Their works are saturated with allusions to supersedeas lease parol, livery and seisin, caveats, fee simple, misprision, and so forth. The marked way in which they drag in the legal terms *brief* and *abstract* (see page 189) is a straw showing the trend

## TRAITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES

of their thoughts. The following is from Chapman's *All Fools*.

That you, Signor Cornelio, Gentleman, for divers and sundry weighty and mature considerations, you especially moving, specifying all the particulars of your wife's enormities in a schedule hereunto annexed, the transcript whereof is in your own tenure, custody, occupation and keeping : That for these, the aforesaid premises, I say, you renounce, disclaim, and discharge Gazetta from being your leeful or your lawful wife : And that you eftsoons divide, disjoin, separate, remove, and finally eloigne, sequester, and divorce her, from your bed and your board ; That you forbid her all access, repair, egress or regress to your person or persons, mansion or mansions, dwellings, habitations, remainences or abodes, or to any shop, cellar, sollar, easements' chamber, dormer, and so forth, now in the tenure, custody, occupation, or keeping of the said Cornelio ; notwithstanding all former contracts, covenants, bargains, conditions, agreements, compacts, promises, vows, affiances, assurances, feoffments, endowments, vouchers, double vouchers, privy entries, actions, declarations, explications, rejoinders, surrejoinders, rights, interests, demands, claims, or titles whatsoever, heretofore betwixt the one and the other party, or parties, being had, made, passed, covenanted, and agreed, from the beginning of the world till the day of the date hereof. Given the seventeenth of November, fifteen hundred and so forth. Here, sir, you must set to your hand.

(Act iv. Scene 1.) 1604-1605.

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Passages of this character argue a surprising familiarity with an unpopular and neglected subject. I am justified in including it among the antipathies of the dramatic mind because no pains are taken by the writers to hide their dislike. Lawyers are the butt of their contemptuous and persistent satire.

In *King John* Shakespeare employs a metaphor derived seemingly from having watched burning parchment.

I am a scribbled form drawn with a pen  
Upon a parchment and against this fire  
Do I shrink up.

(v. 6.) 1623.

Also Chapman in *Alphonsus*,

Mine entrails shrink together like a scroll of  
burning parchment.

(iv 2.) 1654.

A similar passage occurs elsewhere, but I have mislaid the reference.

The French word *sans* is, I believe, an old legal expression. We find Bacon referring to "*sans fee.*"<sup>1</sup> Herein he was matched by the dramatists.

Sans everything.

SHAKESPEARE (*As You Like It*) 1623.

Sans question.

MASSINGER (*New Way to Pay Old Debts*

II. 3.) 1633.

Sans stumbling.

FIELD (*Amends for Ladies* I. I.) 1618.

<sup>1</sup> Bacon habitually employed French words, such as *sans*, *vif*, *difficile*, etc.

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Sans ceremony.

MARSTON (*Antonio and Mellida* III. 3.) 1602.

Sans jeopardy.

ANON (*King John*) 1591.

Law was the career into which Francis Bacon was born and to which he was allied until his dying day, but it was certainly repugnant to him. We find him writing, "I am purposed not to follow the practice of the law because it drinketh too much time which I have dedicated to better purposes." "The Bar," he wittily laments, "will be my Bier." It was one of his hopes to sweep away its cobwebs and reduce it into a short and intelligible code, but to carry this notion into practice was reserved to Napoleon the Great two centuries later.

In their sympathies, which were as broad and extensive as the wide world, the dramatists and Bacon were as united as in their antipathies. Above everything I think they loved music. We have already seen how this subject permeated their thoughts and what subtle similes they drew from it.

In the time of Shakespeare music must have been comparatively a tinkling and a soulless thing, and the dramatists could have had opportunities of hearing little but the Music of the Spheres. The playhouses summoned their patrons by blasts on a trumpet. In 1604 music according to Marston was a "not received custom in our Theatre." In 1611 Beaumont and Fletcher mention it as being "a rare art, though now slighted."<sup>1</sup>

I should like to linger over the many exquisite passages on Music that adorn the Elizabethan

1 *Knight of the Burning Pestle*. 1613.

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drama, but space interdicts. "O thou power of Sound," exclaims Marston,

How thou dost melt me ! Hark now even  
Heaven

Gives up his Soul amongst us !

(*Sophonisba* IV. 1.) 1606.

"With the Ancients," says Bacon,

"Music was in far greater esteem than it is with us nowadays. Their philosophers have filled whole volumes on the subject and some of them have wished us to believe that *the Universe is naught but a Harmony*. Nor am I surprised that these great celebrities made it of so great account.... Pythagoras boasts of having turned the natural spirit (or disposition) of a man of depraved habits into a good direction and cured his vices merely by the soothing sweetness of certain harmonious sounds."

(*Sylva Sylvarum*. Bk. 2. French version 1631.)

This profound Pythagorean notion that Music is the *Soul and essence* of the whole Universe is repeated elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> "The rogue" Day has it in *Humour out of Breath*.

The world's a body : every liberal art

A needful member, Music the Soul and heart.

(I. 1.) 1608.

So also the actor Nat Field in *Woman is a Weathercock*,

O this Music and good wine<sup>2</sup> is the soul of  
all the world.

(III. 2.) 1612.

<sup>1</sup> See *Orchestra* or A Poem of Dancing, judiciously proving the true observation of Time and Measure. (1596.)

<sup>2</sup> Field seems to have been reading the Apocrypha, "Wine and Music rejoice the heart." Eccles : 40. 20.

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This love of music was not merely the amateur and exuberant admiration of the uncritical; on the contrary, the writers were well versed in the principles and technicalities of their beloved art. To quote a casual example they constantly extol the sweetness of a resolved discord.

Discord resolved into a concord improves the harmony.

BACON (PREF. *Novum Organum*) 1620.

Discord oft in music makes the sweeter lay.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* III. 3.) 1590.

The concord of this discord.

SHAKESPEARE (*Midsummer Night's Dream*  
v. 1.) 1600.

It is hardly necessary to remark that the appreciation of music is not a gift bestowed indiscriminately on all poets and thinkers. According to Drummond, Ben Jonson "had no liking for music, the best banquets were those where they mustered no musicians."<sup>1</sup> Darwin mentions regretfully that his studies in Natural History gradually withered his love of music. Of the man who framed the New Philosophy this evidently was not the experience. Aubrey tells us that "his Lordship would many time have Musique in the next roome where he meditated. Every meale according to the season of the yeare, he had his table strewed with sweet herbes and flowers which he said did refresh his spirits and memorie." "If music be the food of love," says Shakespeare, "play on; give me excess of it."

<sup>1</sup> *Conversations.*

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That strain again ! It had a dying fall,  
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet South  
That breathes upon a bank of violets  
Stealing and giving odour.

In his *Essay Of Gardens* Bacon similarly links Flowers and Music. "The breath of flowers " he says "comes and goes like the warbling of music." In the same *Essay* he discusses a list of plants commencing with those of winter. Curiously enough *Perdita* in *A Winter's Tale* runs over the same catalogue in substantially the same order, commencing likewise with those of winter.

A knowledge and love of flowers as great as that of Bacon and Shakespeare is exhibited by the minor dramatists. Their works teem, not only with evidence of practical knowledge, but with metaphors drawn therefrom proving how deeply the subject preoccupied their minds. In *Horticulture*, *grafting* was in those days probably the highest branch. With regard to his efforts in this direction Bacon writes, "My wish here [*Sylva Sylvarum*] is to let the reader obtain from me the knowledge I have myself gained from an almost countless number of experiments which my natural curiosity prompted me to make. My object has been generally either to improve the plants of the garden or to quicken or retard the maturity of fruit bearing trees, or to give them some unusual development, or to work upon them in such other ways as the following pages will shew."<sup>1</sup> The frequency with which the dramatists employ this

<sup>1</sup> From the newly discovered portion of *Sylva Sylvarum* given in "*Bacon's Nova Resuscitatio*." (Begley.)



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art as a metaphor argues their practical familiarity with it.

Experiments to be tried — grafting upon boughs of old trees.

BACON (*Physiological Remains*).

God doth graft His revelations and holy doctrine upon the notions of our reason.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

Graft my soul to virtue.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Wife for a Month* I. I.)  
1624-1647.

A bastard slip of Aragon.

BACON (*Henry VII*) 1622.

Thy sons—fair slips of such a stock.

SHAKESPEARE (2 *Henry VI* II. 2.) 1592.

Noble stock was graft with crab tree slip.

IBID (*Ibid* III. 2.)

Is this [youth] a slip of your own grafting?

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Spanish Curate* I. I.)  
1622.

A goodly youth of amiable grace

Yet but a slender slip.

SPENSER (*Fairy Queen* VI. II.) 1590-1609.

Be sure he shall not graft in such a stock.

PORTER (*Two Angry Women* III. 2.) 1599.

That hardy Roman.

That hopes to graft himself into my stalk.

MASSINGER (*The Bondman* I. I.) 1623-1624.

Thou royal graft, farewell for ever!

MASSINGER (*The Bondman* v. 5.) 1623-1624.

Inoculate their stocks with your graft royal.

CHAPMAN (*Revenge for Honour* II. I.) 1654.

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A very fit stock to graft on.

CHAPMAN (*Monsieur d'Olive* II. 1.) 1606.

A harmful weed by wisdom rooted out  
Can never hurt the true engrafted plant.

PEELE (*Edward I.*) 1593.

Young slips are never graft on windy days.

KYD (*Solyman*) 1592-1599.

Ill grows the tree affordeth ne'er a graft.

NASH (*Summer's Last Will*) 1592-1600.

There is no occasion to quote Shakespeare's innumerable horticultural metaphors and allusions. A similar feature occurs in common in the minor Elizabethan drama and in the writings of Francis Bacon. Opening them at random one strikes on passages such as:—

Lady I return

But barren crops of early protestations  
Frostbitten in the Spring of fruitless hopes.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck*) 1634.

You are very hasty: to garden well  
Seeds must have time to sprout before they

[spring;  
Love ought to creep as doth the dial's shade  
For timely ripe is rotten too, too soon.

GREENE (*Friar Bacon*) 1594.

Our bodies are our gardens to the which  
our wills are gardeners.

SHAKESPEARE (*Othello* I. 3.) 1622.

Stir the earth a little about the roots of this science.

BACON (*Advancement of Learning*) 1605.

Gently stir the mould about the root of the  
question.

BEN JONSON (*Discoveries*) 1641.

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Excellent lord.... you have planted things  
that are like to last.

BACON (DEDI : *Essays*) 1597.

.... entreat your care

To plant me in the favour of some man.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Spanish Curate* II. I.)

1622.

To plant me in mine own inheritance.

FORD (*Perkin Warbeck* II. I.) 1634.

A trait in the character of Bacon to which frequent exception is taken by myopic and superficial critics is his apparently passive acquiescence to the many wrongs that were going on around him. But, as Spedding justly observes, "had he resolved to resist at all hazards and to all lengths every course which he disliked, his life would indeed have presented a simple enough problem to himself and an easy story to his biographer. He must at once have given up public business; he must at once have quitted the public service. Would that have mended the case of the public? So long as he retained his influence as an adviser he could do something though not much."<sup>1</sup>

Both Bacon and the dramatists considered it better to bend than break.

Obedience is better than sacrifice.

BACON (Speech on taking his place in  
Chancery).

I ever knew obedience the best sacrifice.

MASSINGER (*A Very Woman* IV. 3.) 1634.

<sup>1</sup> *Evenings with a Reviewer*, Vol. II. p. 246.

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I have ever learned to obey nor shall my life resist it.

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER (*Valentinian* I. 3.)  
1619-1647.

“Beware,” says Bacon, in the *Advancement of Learning*, “of being carried by greatness and presumption of mind to things too difficult and thus of *striving against the stream* ;” and in his note book we find an entry *Better to bend than break* ; These maxims are re-echoed throughout the drama.

Frame your manners to the time.

SHAKESPEARE (*Taming of the Shrew* I. I.) 1628.

You must practise the manners of the time if you intend to find favour from it.

MASSINGER (*The Unnatural Combat* I. I.) 1629.

For my part I will obey the time : it is in vain to strive against the torrent.

IBID (*Roman Actor* I. I.) 1626-1629.

In vain it is to strive against the stream.

GREENE (*Alphonsus*) 1599.

What are thy Arts, good patriot, teach them me,  
That have preserved thy hair to this white dye,  
And kept so reverend and so dear a head  
Safe on his comely shoulders ?

Arts, Arruntius !

None, but the plain and passive fortitude,  
To suffer and be silent ; *never stretch  
These arms against the torrent* ; live at home,  
With my own thoughts and innocence about me,  
Not tempting the wolves' jaws : these are my arts.

BEN JONSON (*Sejanus* IV. 5.) 1603-5.

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To lose ourselves by building on impossible hopes were desperate madness.

MASSINGER (*Roman Actor* III. I.) 1626-1629.

To have lost himself by building on impossible hopes were—as Spedding caustically points out, “a splendid fate for the man who was adjusting his life to the convenience of the declaimers of a future generation, but unsatisfactory for one who was ambitious of doing some good in his own.”<sup>1</sup>

One of the most noticeable traits of the Elizabethan drama is the unbounded generosity of its writers, and their princely contempt for money. Emerson, who, *me judice*, has of all critics nestled most closely into Shakespeare’s mind, observes, “One can discern in his ample pictures of the Gentleman and the King what forms of humanities pleased him; his delight in troops of friends, in large hospitality, in cheerful giving.”

If when he wrote this passage Emerson had had Bacon in his eye he could hardly have described him more accurately. “When his Lordship was at his country house,” says Aubrey, “St Albans seemed as if the court had been there, so nobly did he live. His servants had liveries with his crest, his watermen were more employed by gentlemen than even the King’s. [When] King James sent a buck to him he gave the keeper fifty pounds.”

Another contemporary —Sir Tobie Matthew—describes the Lord Chancellor as “a man most sweet in his conversation and ways, grave in his judgments, *splendid in his expenses*; a friend unalterable to his friends; an enemy to no man; a

1 *Evenings with a Reviewer*, Vol. II. p. 76.

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most hearty indefatigable servant to the king, and a most earnest lover of the public, having all the thoughts of that large heart of his set upon adorning the age in which he lived, and benefiting as far as possible the whole human race. It is not his greatness that I admire, but his virtue; it is not the favours I have received from him, infinite though they be, that have thus enthralled and enchained my heart; but his whole life and character, which are such that, if he were of an inferior condition, I could not honour him the less, and if he were my enemy, I could not the less love and endeavour to serve him."

From his youth Bacon was ever 'splendid in his expenses.' It is said that he once borrowed £600, £500 of which went on a single jewel. His servants had free access to his money chests and helped themselves *ad libitum*. A friend who, noticing this, on one occasion remonstrated, records that Bacon's manner of receiving the information appeared so strange that "he thought his servants must have had some mysterious power over him."<sup>1</sup>

To the end Bacon maintained his imperial ideas of living. "Do what we can," said Prince Charles on meeting his travelling coach with its retinue of gentlemen, "this man scorns to go out in a snuff!"

The greatness of mind which Bacon exhibited in his contempt of money was supplemented by the conviction that he was born not for himself, but for his countrymen, "Believing," says he in

<sup>1</sup> Spedding, Vol. 14, p. 564.

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the *Proem* to the *Great Instauration*, "that I was born for the service of mankind... I set myself to consider in what way mankind might be best served.. I thought that a mans own country had some special claims upon him more than the rest of the world."

In the *Muses Looking Glass*, Randolph thus paraphrases these sentiments.

Being born not for ourselves, but for our friends  
Our country and our glory ; it is fit  
We do express the majesty of our souls  
In deeds of bounty and munificence.

A few lines onwards he adds :—

— To the building of a pyramid *at St Albans*.

The reason why the town St Albans should be thus eternised, in fact why it is dragged in at all, is not apparent.

It is a noticeable fact that Elizabethan literature underwent certain pronounced phases. The blithesome and ethereal writings of Spenser, Lyly, Greene, and Peele, culminated in the ripe splendour of Shakespeare ; to be followed in turn by a grave and sombre group of writers of which Massinger, Webster, Tourneur, and Ford, are typically representative. "Whatever may be assigned as the causes, it is indubitable," says Professor Arber, that there came over writers and readers "a mighty change. Strength saturated with gracefulness sought delight in majesty.... In each period there was most excellent strength and cunning but the spirit was different. In the former it was the breath of *L'Allegro* ; in the latter that of *Il Penseroso*." <sup>1</sup>

1 Intro : Bacon's *Essays*.

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A French critic has very exquisitely said that Shakespeare "is a friend whom Heaven has given to the unhappy of every age and every country." <sup>1</sup> If it be true that the Elizabethan dramatists climbed often to the mountain tops and were watchers for the Dawn to flush over the world, it is equally true that their dwellings were for the most part among the marshlands of Sorrow. Running throughout the April writings of Spenser and the earlier dramatists there is a most poignant note of suffering. In Shakespeare, sadness and sweetness wrestle for mastery: in Shakespeare's successors, sorrow alone reigns predominant and unchallenged. As an example of Webster's tendency to brood over the sinister, Mr J. A. Symonds quotes the passage,

You speak as if a man  
Should know what fowl is *confined* in a baked meat  
Afore you cut it open.

In Shakespeare the same macabre tendency is incipient; in fact, Mr Symonds's instance is identically matched by Petruchio's reference to Katherine's headgear as "a paltry cap, a custard *coffin*". <sup>2</sup> Massinger gives one the impression of a soul drowned deep in the unfathomed seas of trouble. Hallam considers him as a tragic writer "second only to Shakespeare." His genius "abounded in sweetness and dignity;" "Apt to delineate the loveliness of Virtue and to delight in its recompense after trial his own disposition led him more willingly to pictures of moral beauty. A peculiar refinement, a mixture of gentleness and

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées de Shakespeare* Chas. Nodier.

<sup>2</sup> *Taming of the Shrew*.



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benignity with noble daring belong to some of his favourite characters. ”

In the beautiful writings of Heywood Charles Lamb considers that generosity, courtesy, sweetness, gentleness and Christianity shine more conspicuous than in those of Shakespeare ; an opinion which Mr J. A. Symonds endorses as “ in many points a just one. ” Mr Symonds adds, “ Heywood has a sincerity, a tenderness of pathos and an instinctive perception of nobility. ” Dekker we are told was “ a man whose inborn sweetness and gleefulness of soul carried him through vexations and miseries which would have crushed a spirit less hopeful, cheerful and humane. ”<sup>1</sup>

When we compare these characteristics with those of Francis Bacon we perceive the remarkable identity of temperament. “ His mildness, ” says Spedding, “ was the effect of the sweetness, thoughtfulness, nobleness and modesty of his nature. ” From his youth upwards his health was in a ticklish unsettled state. While he and his brother and Anthony were “ poor and working for bread Francis suffered from “ a long and languishing infirmity. ” In 1595 we find Lady Anne Bacon fretting over her son and writing to Anthony, “ I am sorry your brother with *inward secret grief* hindereth his health. ” In later life the storms that passed over his head left him physically, and almost mentally a wreck. Among his letters is one endorsed “ To my Lord of Buckingham after my troubles, ” “ I thank God, ” he says, “ I have overcome the bitterness of this cup by Christian resolution, so that worldly matters are but mint and cumin. ”

<sup>1</sup> (*Memoir of Thomas Dekker. Works 1873*).

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“ Superhuman man of spirit,” writes Brandes, “ he embodied nature within and overcame the bitterness caused by his wrongs in the harmony of his own richly spiritual life.” These extraordinarily apt words are applied by Brandes, not to Francis Bacon, but to *Prospero* in whom, as all critics are agreed, Shakespeare delineated himself.

In the Tragedy of *The Broken Heart*<sup>1</sup> Ford writes,

*My fame....* I bequeath  
To *Memory* and *Time*'s old daughter Truth ;  
If ever my unhappy *name* find mention.  
When I am fall'n to dust, may it deserve  
Beseeming *charity* without dishonour.

a hope which rings like a pathetic echo of the words in Bacon's draft Will and Testament, “ For my *name* and *memory*, I leave it to men's *charitable* speeches and to foreign nations and the next ages ; and to mine own countrymen *after some time be past.* ”

1 (III. I.) 1633.

## CHAPTER XV

### CONCLUSION

My imperfect outline is now finished, leaving me with the discouraged consciousness of how much I have left unsaid. So far, however, as regards the *unity* of a large section of the Elizabethan Drama, the proof of this by parallelisms could be indefinitely extended. Hardly a week passes without some writer discovering and pointing out fresh and inexplicable plagiarisms and "coincidences," and this field is quite exhaustless.

It now merely remains to consider the leading facts and to seek some logical solution for them; but before proceeding to this I shall venture to adduce a few more reminders of the intellectual barbarism of the Elizabethan era. Shakespeare has so gilded and refined this epoch that almost necessarily we judge it by his greatness. As I have already said the truer compliment to Elizabethan Literature is to measure its proportions by the infamy and meanness of its cradle. Shakespeare's aerolites are so skyey, that to the detriment of true appreciation, in following them one is unconsciously lifted from the soggy earth and grows forgetful of the squalor into which they fell.

Buckle, in his *History of Civilisation in England*, observes, "It is difficult for an ordinary reader,

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living in the middle of the nineteenth century, to understand that only three hundred years before he was born, the public mind was in the benighted state disclosed in the preceding chapter. It is still more difficult for him to understand that the darkness was shared not merely by men of an average education, but by men of considerable ability, men in every respect among the foremost of their age. A reader of this sort may satisfy himself that the evidence is indisputable; he may verify the statements I have brought forward, and admit that there is no possible doubt about them; but even then he will find it hard to conceive that there ever was a state of society in which such miserable absurdities were welcomed as sober and important truths, and were supposed to form an essential part of the general stock of European knowledge.

“ But a more careful examination will do much to dissipate this natural astonishment. In point of fact, so far from wondering that such things were believed, the wonder would have been if they were rejected. For in those times, as in all others, everything was of a piece. Not only in historical literature, but in all kinds of literature, on every subject—in Science, in Religion, in Legislation—the presiding principle was a blind and unhesitating credulity. The more the history of Europe anterior to the seventeenth century is studied, the more completely will this fact be verified. Now and then a great man arose, who had his doubts respecting the universal belief; who whispered a suspicion as to the existence of giants thirty feet high, of dragons with wings, and of armies flying through the air; who thought that astrology

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might be a cheat, and necromancy a bubble ; and who even went so far as to raise a question respecting the propriety of drowning every witch and burning every heretic. A few such men there undoubtedly were ; but they were despised as mere theorists, idle visionaries, who, unacquainted with the practice of life, arrogantly opposed their own reason to the wisdom of their ancestors. In the state of society in which they were born, it was impossible that they should make any permanent impression. Indeed, they had enough to do to look to themselves, and provide for their own security ; for, until the latter part of the sixteenth century, there was no country in which a man was not in great personal peril if he expressed open doubts respecting the belief of his contemporaries. ”<sup>1</sup>

In the time of Shakespeare the so-called “civilisation” of Europe was for the most part a whirlpool of brute force. Englishmen were little, if anything, behind the rest of the world in the folly and ferocity of their minds. Life, as Burton somewhere expresses it, was but little better than “a snarling fit ;” the more closely studied the more beastlike are the existing conditions seen to have been. To the discerning eyes of Robert Burton our English towns were but mean, base-built, unglorious, poor, small, rare in sight, ruinous, thin of inhabitants, vile and ugly to behold. “Amongst them,” says he, “there is only London that bears the face of a city, the rest in mean estate, ruinous most part, poor and full of beggars ready to starve rather than work,

<sup>1</sup> Vol 1. pp. 269-270. London 1903.

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swarming with rogues, thieves, drunkards and discontented persons.”<sup>1</sup> Stubbes comments upon the horrible condition of Elizabethan London, “where the poor lie in the streets upon pallets of straw or else in the mire and dirt as commonly it is seen.” Having no covering to keep them from the cold they, “are permitted to die in the streets like dogs or beasts without any mercy or compassion shewed to them at all. And if any be sick of the plague (as they call it) or any other disease, their masters and mistresses are so impudent as straightway they throw them out of their doors. And so being carried forth either in carts or otherwise and thrown in the streets there they end their days most miserably.”<sup>2</sup>

We have seen the dismal ebb to which Learning in Shakespeare’s time had fallen. “No opinion” says Robert Burton, “was too absurd, prodigious or ridiculous” to find favour with the learned. Their books and treatises were “full of dotage.” “If,” as he impatiently adds, the *learned* were “so sottish” with “no more brains than so many beetles, what of the commonalty, what of the rest?”<sup>3</sup>

We have seen the equally miserable and distressed condition of Theology. That I have drawn none too lurid a picture is maintained by Burton, to whom I again turn for support. “The clergy,” says he, were “a low lot, poor, ignorant, sordid, melancholy, wretched, despicable and contemptible.” Sacred Theology, he declares, was trampled

1. *Anatomy of Melancholy* Vol. 1. pp. 62 and 97. (York Library).

2. *Anatomy of Abuses*, S. S. R. Ser. vi. No. 4. p. 60.

3. *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Vol. 1. p. 45. (York Library).

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and "polluted by idiots and mountebanks, the Heavenly Muses prostituted as some common thing." "The Muses here sit sad," says also Michael Drayton, "a sort of swine unseasonably defile those sacred springs."

Drummond of Hawthornden summarises his unhallowed surroundings in a sonnet.

All good hath left this age, all tracks of shame ;  
Mercy is banished, and pity dead ;  
Justice, from whence it came, to heaven is fled ;  
Religion, maim'd, is thought an idle name ;  
Faith to distrust and malice hath given place ;  
Envy with poison'd teeth hath friendship torn ;  
Renowned Knowledge is a despis'd scorn ;  
Now evil 'tis all evil not to embrace :  
There is no life, save under servile bands ;  
To make desert a vassal to their crimes,  
Ambition with Avarice join hands.

O ever-shameful, O most shameless times !  
Save that sun's light we see, of good hear tell,  
This earth we court so much were very hell.

Writing in verse to his friends William Jeffreys and George Sandys, Michael Drayton asks hopelessly,

What can'st thou look or hope for from his pen  
Who lives with beasts, though in the shape  
[of men.

The "Golden Epoch of Elizabeth" impressed him so little that he considered

This very time wherein we two now live  
Shall in the compass wound the Muses more  
Than all the old English ignorance before.

According to the testimony of contemporaries England was fogged under a pall of Cimmerian

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ignorance. Gross habits and viler "Italianate" customs walked unchecked, and unabashed "jeered Heaven in the face." "O God," cries Drayton, "though Virtue mightily do grieve for all this world, yet will I not believe but that she's fair and lovely." Against learning, ignorance stood :—

Like some dull porter at a Palace Gate ;  
So dull and barbarous lately are we grown  
That for man's knowledge it enough doth make  
If he can learn to read an almanack.

Education was at such a premium that the mere capacity to read and write entitled the possessors to the absurd privileges of "Benefit of Clergy." The Elizabethan nobility Burton brands as "barbarous idiots, dull, illiterate and proud." Devoting their main energies to sports and licentiousness we are told that they contemned thinkers as mere "pen and inkhorn men, pedantical slaves." Learning was in their estimation "no whit beseeeming the calling of a gentleman." "'Tis now come to that pass that he is held no gentleman, a very 'milk-sop, a clown of no bringing up, that will not drink, fit for no company. He is your only gallant that plays it off finest ; no disparagement now to stagger in the streets, reel, rave, etc. but much to his fame and renown." <sup>1</sup>

Among such aristocracy one can understand Lodge's lament that Knowledge was "not in request." In his *Advice to a Son* Osborn tells us that "the several books incomparable Bacon was known to read, beside those relating to Law,

<sup>1</sup> *Anatomy of Melancholy*, vol. I. p. 261. (York Library.)



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were objected to him as an argument of his insufficiency to manage the place of Solicitor General." Learning, says Shirley, is not now considered "compatible with native honour." <sup>1</sup> Drummond of Hawthornden notes that :—

The man to temperance inclined  
Is held but of a base and abject mind.

He bewails that, "noble minds live orphan-like forlorn", and adds :—

What hapless hap had I now to be born  
In these unhappy times, and dying days,  
Of this else-doating world, when good decays,  
Love is quench'd forth, and virtue held a scorn.

"To tell my Country's shame," says Michael Drayton, "I not delight but do bemoan it."

As the English now so did the stiff-necked Jews  
Their noble prophets utterly refuse,  
And of those men such poor opinion had  
They counted Isaiah and Ezekiel mad.

He concludes :—

My noble friend, I would I might have quit  
This Age of ours, and that I might have writ,  
Before all other, how much the brave pen  
Had here been honoured of the Englishmen ;  
Goodness and Knowledge held by them in prize,  
How hateful to them Ignorance and Vice ;  
But, it falls out the contrary is true  
And so, my Jeffreys, for this time, adieu !

The intellect of the Country seems to have been mainly engrossed with religious disputation. "Theology rules there," said Grotius writing of England, and when Casaubon was invited by

<sup>1</sup> *Lady of Pleasure* iv. 3. 1635,

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King James "he found King and people indifferent to pure letters."<sup>1</sup> An instructive straw denoting this indifference is surely poor destitute old Stowe's Royal License—to beg!

Of letters Poetry seems to have been the branch most particularly in disrepute. The expression "poet" came, we are told, to be a term of reproach, a scorn, a base and contemptible nick-name. "Few nowadays," said Massinger, "dare express themselves a friend to unbefriended Poesie." According to Drayton, Poesie was followed with such fell despite—

That she must hence, she may no longer stay,  
The dreary Fates prefixed have the day  
Of her departure, which is now come on,  
And they command her straightways to be gone ;  
That bestial herd so hotly her pursue,  
And to her succour there be very few,  
*Nay, none at all*, her wrongs that will redress,  
But she must wander in the wilderness.

I have quoted sufficient to prove that contemporaries were entirely blind to the alleged grace and intellectuality of their surroundings. Yet paradoxically, those times which Drayton dubs "These feverous dog days, blest by no record, but to be everlastingly abhorred," constitute in orthodox eyes the most radiantly learned and poetic epoch in the history of English civilisation. Critics petulantly deny that the noble prophets were utterly refused ; London, they tell us, was "rocking and roaring with intellectual fervour." The common herd were clamouring for sweetness and light and, far from hounding

1. *Short History*. Green. p. 462.

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Poetry, they treasured and protected her in their honest but unwashed <sup>1</sup> bosoms. Out of the verminous swarm of whoremongers, rakehells, roaring boys, coney catchers and cozeners of Bank-side and Shoreditch we are asked to believe that there sprang spontaneously a slum-born Minerva veiled in a Latinity of language, (much of which must have been Sanscrit and Hebrew to the unlettered hearers and utterly beyond the reaches of their souls) "the embodiment of all the Ages, Wisdom and Philosophy and the majestic and imperishable inheritance of the English speaking race." <sup>2</sup> The elder Dumas set the English drama next to God in the cosmic system of the Universe. "After God," he wrote, "Shakespeare has created most." The authors of much of this miraculous Drama, if our records are not at fault were 'lightly the lewdest persons in the land,' whose lives "excelled all precedent of crime."

It is said by Milton that good men only give good things. Granting that the Dramatists were an exception to this rule and that their writings were the fruit of Pythian inspiration; we must then answer Coleridge that God *does* play miracles in sport, and that He *does* choose idiots, and worse than idiots, by whom to convey Divine Truth to man. It were consistent if those who accept this theory ceased to train and educate their children, but left them to run among the gutters in the trust that by some Divine accident

<sup>1</sup> Good soap was an almost impossible luxury and clothes had to be washed with cowdung, hemlock, nettles and refuse soap than which, in Harrison's opinion, 'there is none more unkindly savour.' *Social Eng.*: Traill vol. 3. 544.

<sup>2</sup> Charles and Mary Lamb on Shakespeare.

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they too might be struck by a Heavenly beam of Poesy and Philosophy and become the Shakespeares of the future.

It is not habitual for Genius to flock in crowds among the common herd. "In sublimity of soul there is no contagion. High thoughts and high emotions are by their very existence isolated;"<sup>1</sup> but, as we have seen, the Elizabethan stewards were bristling with encyclopaedic poets, all pioneers of liberty and justice, animated by identical aims; and lords of the truest gentleness. It seems as though Nature, having achieved a masterpiece, ("the greatest intellect," according to Carlyle, "in our recorded world"), grew enamoured with her handiwork and scrupled to destroy so extraordinary a prodigy. As we have seen, the whole outburst of the Elizabethan drama, although apparently fortuitous, is in effect a succession of etched proofs, pulled seemingly from the same inimitable plate. Many of the early experimental impressions, blurred and indistinct, seem to have been thrown aside as defective. In Shakespeare, Nature, having worked up her masterpiece, obtained an almost flawless print; "I find no human soul so beautiful these fifteen hundred years," says Carlyle. "Wherever there are men," says Emerson, "in the degree in which they are civil he has risen to his place as first poet in the world." Subsequent to Shakespeare, Nature's inimitable plate became much worn and obscured, but to the decline and final end the impressions obviously coincide even to the *minutiæ* of blots and scratches.

1 *De Profundis*.

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Not only does the Elizabethan drama show throughout that its writers were pervaded by a set of sentiments in common, but as we have seen, the dramatic intellect seems to have been a giant twin to the philosophic mind of the illustrious Bacon. What relationship, if any, existed between them? The answer returned by academic and popular opinion is none whatever. "Bacon and Shakespeare," according to Prof. Dowden, "stand far apart. In moral character and in gifts of intellect and soul we should find little resemblance between them." <sup>1</sup> Mr. Sidney Lee maintains that the interval separating Bacon from Shakespeare is from every point of view a wide one; "The intellect of both Shakespeare and Bacon may well be termed miraculous. The facts of biography may be unable to account for the emergence of the one or the other, but they can prove convincingly that *no two great minds of a single era pursued literary paths more widely disserved.*" <sup>2</sup>

Of the value of these *dicta* the reader is in a position to form his own opinion. The actual truth is that in Shakespeare's plays, as Prof. David Masson said upwards of fifty years ago, before perception had unhappily been blinded by controversy, "we have Thought, History, Exposition, Philosophy, all within the round of the poet. It is as if into a mind poetical in *form* there had been poured all the *matter* that existed in the mind of his contemporary Bacon. The only difference between him and Bacon sometimes is that Bacon writes an essay and calls it his own, while Shake-

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art.* p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century.*

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spere writes a similar essay and puts it into the mouth of a Ulysses or a Polonius."<sup>1</sup>

Not merely the plays of Shakespeare, but the whole Elizabethan Drama form, I think I may claim to have shewn, a veritable *Arbor Scientiae*. Seduced by the wealth of fruit and flowers upon the topmost bough, we have been for the most part unconscious that the Dramatists are all branches from the same great trunk, a verity perceptible at once on pushing aside the leaves and flowers.

Though the human Mind is changeable and shifting as a quicksand, perpetually assimilating new grains of thought, and modifying or discarding old ones; not only were the faculties of Bacon and the dramatists identical, but the changes and modifications which must perpetually have occurred in their respective brain cells seem to have *systematically synchronised*. We have moreover seen the playwrights quoting from Bacon's personal and private correspondence; and we have seen them paraphrasing his State papers, and borrowing from his unpublished note books. On the other side we have seen Bacon's secretaries apparently making manuscript copies, not only of Shakespeare's plays, but also of those attributed to inferior players. We have seen Bacon the acknowledged Columbus of Literature, dogged on his voyage through the Pillars of Hercules by a flotilla of writers who traversed simultaneously the same Thought Oceans in the same latitude and the same longitude: yet Bacon seems never to have had an inkling of his fellow

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Other Essays. 1874. Essay v. p. 242, reprinted from North British Review 1853.

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wanderers! In *The Advancement of Learning* he takes count of all current knowledge, and makes "a general and faithful perambulation of learning:" not only does he ignore Shakespeare and the other dramatists, but he goes out of his path to deplore that he "stands alone," pointedly observing that he has "*never met* any person disposed to apply his mind to similar thoughts." In the *Novum Organum*, he goes even further, and claims to be "in this course altogether a pioneer, following in no man's track, nor sharing these counsels with any one." (Bk. I, Aph. cxiii).

His own age, and subsequent ages, have conceded the justice of this claim. Oldenburg the first Secretary to the Royal Society wrote; "The enrichment of the storehouse of Natural Philosophy was a work begun by the *single* care and conduct of the excellent Lord Verulam." "I have heard his Lordship," says Rawley, "speak complainingly that his Lordship (who thinketh he deserveth to be an Architect in this building) should be forced to be a workman and labourer, and dig the clay and burn the brick. And more than that (according to the hard condition of the Israelites at the latter end) to gather the straw and stubble over all the fields to burn the bricks withal. For he knoweth that *except he do it* nothing will be done."

Hallam comments upon the Temple of which "Bacon saw in vision before him the stately form, and decorated pediments in all their breadth of light and harmony of proportion, while long vistas of receding columns and glimpses of internal splendour revealed a glory that was not per-

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mitted to him to comprehend." And yet, Bacon's Temple was even then rising up around him, not only to his design, but his very words and phrases were adorning its walls and his actual name was being chiselled into its columns!

"Great men," says Emerson, "are more distinguished by range and extent than by originality. If we require the originality which consists in weaving like a spider its web from its own bowels, in finding clay and making bricks, and building the house, no great men are original." Yet as Rawley testifies, the illustrious Bacon had to gather his own straw and stubble, and, as we have shown, the Elizabethan dramatists were equally original. They, too, coined the verbal bricks and fabricated the language with which their palaces are constructed.

The writer of a pamphlet entitled *An Account of all the Lord Bacon's Works* (1679) observes, "The work therefore of the *Instauration* was an original and a work so vast and comprehensive in its design that, though others in that age might hew out this or the other pillar, yet of him alone it seemeth true that he framed the whole model of the House of Wisdom." Yet Bacon was oblivious to the workmen who were at work upon his own design and had never met any person disposed to apply his mind to similar thoughts!

As a courtier it is almost assured that he must have come into personal contact with Lyly —said to have been the Master of the Revels. Ben Jonson was Bacon's friend and at one time his secretary. Chapman was "generously patronised by Francis Bacon during his later years."<sup>1</sup> An-

<sup>1</sup> *Our English Homer*. White p. 13.



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tony Cooke, Bacon's maternal grandfather, was the "ever kind Maecenas" to Michael Drayton.<sup>1</sup> Ford was a Gray's Inn man, and dramatised Bacon's *Henry VII* under the title of *Perkin Warbeck*. Randolph was the writer of an exalted eulogy of Bacon and it is to be assumed was a close personal acquaintance. Shirley was for a while a schoolmaster at St. Albans; later, he lived "probably" in Gray's Inn.<sup>2</sup> One of the witnesses attesting Bacon's death was "Thomas Browne," and that this was the author of *Religio Medici* is to be inferred from the fact of the subsequent intimacy between the Bacon family and the Norwich Physician.

For Bacon then to disown all knowledge of these disciples seems to convict him of strange disingenuity. That he imposed upon his own blind generation is not so hard to explain as that his reckless plagiarisms should have escaped the vigilance of modern commentators. Why have these not long ago exposed the hollowness of his pretensions? Following Macaulay's lead they have gnawn very officiously at his morals but have suffered us to remain under the illusion that the deep and judicious Verulam was the man who dragged Aristotle from his pedestal; who broke through the Pillars of Hercules; steered the ship of human knowledge across "that immense ocean that surrounds the Island of Truth," and was an "unrivaled" Prince of English Prose. In what solitary respect did Bacon outstrip the Vulgar?

Not only on the face of it must he be lowered from his pedestal, but no just mind can avoid

1. *Michael Drayton*. Elton p. 43.

2. *Holborn and Bloomsbury*. Besant p. 72.

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the inference that unless some different explanation be forthcoming, the writings of Shakespeare consist almost entirely of proverbial sayings which were then in every man's mouth.

*Three hundred* years according to Ben Jonson, is the period that Nature requires to produce a poet, "hence the coming up of good poets is so thin and rare amongst us." Speaking of Bacon, Archbishop Tenison said, "I affirm with good assurance that Nature gives the world *that* individual species but once in *five hundred* years." At the very time these two luminaries were writing, Nature in the slum-warrens of London was insistently framing intellectual monsters embodying the philosophic faculties of Lord Verulam and the poetic fires of Shakespeare.

From a conclusion so blasphemous to reason many must, I feel sure, turn away with contempt. Let us then briefly consider one or two alternative possibilities.

In *The Defence of Poesie* Sir Philip Sidney observes, "The philosophers of Greece durst not a long time appear to the world but under the mask of poets. So Thales, Empedocles, and Parmenides, sang their natural philosophy in verse. So did Pythagoras and Phocylides their moral counsels."

Is it possible that certain philosophers of England were driven by the barbarous exigencies of their age to adopt a similar expedient, and to publish their moral counsels under the masks of the actor-managers who staged them?

The anonymous author of *The Arte of English Poesie* claims to have known "many notable gentlemen in the court that have written commendably

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and suppressed it again, or suffered it to be published without their own names to it, as if it were a discredit for a gentleman to seem learned and to show himself amorous of any good art. " In *A Farewell to Folly* (1591) Greene writes, "Others, if they come to write or publish anything in print, which for their calling and gravity being loth to have any profane pamphlets pass under their hand, *get some other to set his name to their verses.* Thus is the ass made proud by *this underhand brokery* and he that cannot write true English without the aid of clerks of parish churches will need make himself the father of Interludes.

What has become of these writings published under other men's names, and who were the putative authors who fathered the Interludes? If they have not yet been identified, is not a search worth undertaking? The vitriolic Nash seems also to have had some inkling of underhand stage brokery. His words are: "Sundrie other sweet gentlemen have vaunted their pens in private devices and trickt up a companie of taffeta fooles with their feathers. "

It would be interesting if the names of the 'sweet gentlemen,' also of the taffeta fooles, were forthcoming.

That dramatic "authors" were sometimes known to be guilty of imposition is to be inferred from the following lines of John Taylor, the water poet.

Thou brag'st what fame thou got'st upon the stage  
Upon St Georges Day last, sir ; you gave  
To eight Knights of the Garter (like a knave)  
Eight manuscripts (or books) all fairlie writ,

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Informing them they were your mother wit  
And you compil'd them ; then were you regarded.  
All this is true and this I dare maintain  
*The matter came from out a learned brain.* (1615)<sup>1</sup>

In an anonymous Elizabethan poem I have met  
with the following enquiry.

Who sees an army all in rank advance  
But deems a wise Commander is in place  
Which leadeth on that brave victorious dance ?

If internal evidence has any value whatever the wise Bellman and Commander of the dramatic dance was inevitably that 'sweet gentleman' Francis Bacon. "There is," as Spedding says, "a character in language as in handwriting, which it is hardly possible to disguise. Little tricks of thought — like tricks of the hand — peculiarities of which the writer is unconscious, are perceptible by the reader". On the sole strength of internal evidence the anonymous Waverley Novels were correctly assigned to Walter Scott who published them anonymously because he feared it would be deemed derogatory to the dignity of a Clerk of Sessions to publish novels under his own name. There is a story told of Bacon's reply to Queen Elizabeth on an occasion when she proposed to put to the torture the supposed author of a seditious pamphlet. "Nay Madam, rack not his body — *rack his style*, give him paper and pens ; with help of books bid him carry on his tale. By comparing the two parts I will tell you if he be the true man."

It is a well recognised canon that Genius takes colour from its surroundings. The Elizabethan

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Early London Theatres*. p. 272. Ordish. 1894.

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drama not only fails to reflect the vice and deformity of its producers, but it perversely and systematically pictures for us the predilections and environment of the Courtier. The culture is innate, the clowning is merely depicted.

Sometimes the writers are at pains to enlighten us how and why their knowledge of low life was acquired.

*Lord Noland.* I wonder how thou camest to the knowledge of these nasty villains.

*Moll.* I must confess,  
In younger days, when I was apt to stray,  
I've sat among such adders; seen their stings,  
As any here might, and in full playhouses  
Watched their quick-diving hands, to bring to  
[shame  
Such rogues, and in that stream met an ill name.  
When next, my lord, you spy any one of those,  
So he be in his art a scholar, question him;  
Tempt him with gold to open the large book  
Of his close villanies; and you yourself shall cant  
Better than poor Moll can, and know more laws  
Of cheators, lifters, nips, foists, puggards, curbers,  
With all the devil's blackguard, than it's fit  
Should be discovered to a noble wit.

MIDDLETON (*The Roaring Girl* v. 1.) 1611.

It is a formula among certain critics that Lord Bacon was "congenitally unfitted" to be a poet; but in the judgment of Percy Bysshe Shelley the direct contrary is true. "Lord Bacon was a poet. His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect. It is a strain

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which distends, and then bursts the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy... Plato exhibits the rare union of close and subtle logic with the Pythian enthusiasm of poetry, melted by the splendour and harmony of his periods into one irresistible stream of musical impressions, which hurry the persuasions onward, as in a breathless career. His language is that of an immortal spirit rather than of a man. Bacon is, perhaps, the only writer who, in these particulars, can be compared with him."<sup>1</sup>

Bacon refers to himself as a "*concealed poet*;" Aubrey records that "His Lordship was a good poet *but concealed* as appears by his letters." Campion, Waller, Davies, and Stow, each independently numbers Bacon among the poets, but their testimony is overshadowed by a collection of elegiac verses published in 1626 under the title of *Memoriæ Honoratissime Domini Francisci Baronis de Verulamii Vicecomitis Sancti Albani Sacrum Londini, in officina Joh. Haviland.*

Of these thirty-two Latin poems, some are signed in full by notorieties such as George Herbert, Williams (Bishop of Lincoln), and Sir William Boswell; others bear simply initials. In an introductory note Rawley observes that he had many other similar verses in his possession but that he merely edited and printed a selected few.<sup>2</sup>

That the poetic and moral preëminence of

<sup>1</sup> *A Defense of Poetry.*

<sup>2</sup> These *Memorials* were republished in the Harleian Miscellany, vol. X, pp. 287 et seq. 1813. Also in Blackbourne's edition of Bacon's *Works*, London 1730.

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Francis Bacon was known and appreciated by upwards of thirty contemporaries is unmistakably apparent. Twenty-seven of these Elegies speak of him as a transcendent poet. He is apostrophised as "The Morning Star of the Muses",<sup>1</sup> "The Hinge upon which turns the world of Literature,"<sup>2</sup> "The Tenth Muse and The Glory of the Muses' Choir."<sup>3</sup>

Phœbus, we are told, "feared that Bacon should be king among the Muses."<sup>4</sup> He is described as "a Muse more choice than the Nine,"<sup>5</sup> as being able to immortalise the Muses,<sup>6</sup> and as "Apollo the Master of our Choir."<sup>7</sup>

In the melodious and well-ordered chorus of the Elizabethan dramatists we have seen how each individual writer deemed himself to be an Orpheus entrusted with the taming of unruly passions by the insinuating sweetness of Philosophy. In one of the longest of the *Manes* we find Lord Verulam hailed as an Orpheus who completely renovated Philosophy, *using Comedy ana Tragedy for the exposition of her doctrines.*

Just as Eurydice wandering amid the shades of Dis yearned to lay hold of Orpheus, and as Orpheus with winged hand (Styx the while previously scarce ruffled, but now leaping to the sound) touched the strings of his lyre, so did Philosophy, entangled in the enigmas of mere word-dealers, seek Bacon as her champion and caressed by that hand raised high her

1 *Musarum Phosphorus.*

2 *Cardo litterarii.*

3 *Decima musa, decusque chori.*

4 *At Phœbum ut metuit ne rex foret iste Camænis.*

5 *Plus novem edecumata musa musis.*

6 *Et æternare Camænas qui poteras.*

7 *Nostri præses Apollo chori.*

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crest ; and as she humbly crept in comedy he did not, after the manner of triflers, patch her, but completely renovated her, and afterwards more brilliantly still in loftier flight of tragedy he soared, and Aristotle alive again flourishes anew in the *Novum Organum*.<sup>1</sup>

As we have seen, not only did the dramatic poets apply to themselves the fable of Orpheus but in versatility and quick-change they recognised their own likeness to the ever-disguising Proteus. Among the *Manes* we find a writer noting this perplexing versatility as a peculiar characteristic in Bacon, "At length we ask him, 'Who art thou?' for he walks not every day showing the same face."<sup>2</sup> Another writer adds that properly to understand Bacon, one must add, "ex Ithaca fandi fictor et omne tenes," which seems to mean "like Ulysses disguised and a poet, then you comprehend all."

The extracts which I have already quoted from these *lachrymæ* are striking, but statements even stranger remain still to be noted. We are told that "the demi-god of Verulam, such was his passion for writing, filled the world with tomes,"<sup>3</sup>

1 (Qualis per umbras Ditis Eurydice vagans  
Palpare gestiit Orpheum, quali Orpheus,  
Saliente tandem, vix prius crispa, Styge,  
Alite fibras lyrae titillavit manu ;  
Talis plicata philologon aenigmatis,  
Petiit Baconum vindicem, tali manu  
Lactata cristas extulit philosophia ;  
Humique soccis repitantem comicis,  
Non proprio ardelionibus molimine,  
Sarsit, sed instauravit ; hinc politius  
Surgit cothurno celsiore, et Organo  
Stagirita virbius reviviscit Novo.)

2 (Quis iste tandem ? non enim vultu ambulat quotidiano.)

3 (Dum scripturavit multum Verulamius heros  
Imbuit et crebris sæcla voluminibus.)



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that "Death, jealous, eyed those writings as they came, and ill their growing number could endure."<sup>1</sup> One writer states, "Thou hast filled, O Bacon, the world with thy writings and the ages with thy glory;"<sup>2</sup> "If you will claim, O Bacon, all that you have given to the world and the Muses, or if you wish to be their creditor, then love, the earth, the Muses, Jove's secrets, prayer, heaven, song, incense, and grief, will become bankrupt [or confound the score]."<sup>3</sup> In the sonnets addressed to his cherished IDEA — a lady to whom commentators tell us he was long faithful but never married — Drayton writes,

My fair, if thou wilt register my love,  
A world of volumes shall thereof arise.

Whence should this "world of volumes" arise? And where are the tomes on tomes with which Bacon is said to have endowed Posterity? His acknowledged works will almost go into ones pocket.

Finally, the reader is informed that, "Thou alone, who darest to weave together these hanging threads, shalt know whom these memorials enshrine."<sup>4</sup> The impression created by these and other contemporary allusions to Bacon is that the writers were possessed of some momentous secret which they were eager to impart, but were vowed

1 (Viderat exultos mors dudum exosa libellos  
Scripta nec infaelix tam numerosa tulit.)

2 (Replesti mundum scriptis et saecula fama.)

3 (Si repetes quantum mundo musisque (Bacone)  
Donasti, vel si creditor esse velis;

Conturbabit amor, mundus, musaeque, Jovisque  
Arca, preces, coelum, carmina, thura, dolor.)

4 (At tu, qui pendentem audes detexere telam,  
Solutus quem condant haec monumenta scies.)

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not to reveal. Ben Jonson, in his well-known Ode to Lord Bacon, writes,

Hail, happy Geniis of this ancient pile !  
How comes it all things so about thee smile ?  
The fire, the wine, the men ! and in the midst  
Thou stand'st *as if some mystery thou didst !*  
Pardon, I read it in thy face, the day  
For whose returns, and many, all these pray ;  
And so do I.

He continues,

'Tis a brave cause of joy, let it be known,  
For 'twere a narrow gladness, kept thine own.

The brave cause of joy, whatever it were, was not apparently made known, and in 1630 we find another writer similarly begging for leave "to pull the curtain bye."

O, give me leave to pull the curtain bye,  
*That clouds thy worth in such obscurity ;*  
Good Seneca, stay but a while thy bleeding,  
T'accept what I received at thy reading.  
Here I present it in a solemn strain :  
And thus I pluck the curtain back again.

(From the *Attorneys' Academy*, Thomas Powell).

Wats, the translator of the 1640 edition of *The Advancement of Learning*, states that Bacon acted the high parts of the greatest scholar and the greatest statesman of his time and so quit himself in both that " he became Lord Keeper of the Seal of England and of the Great Seal of Nature both at once, which is a mystery beyond the comprehension of his own times, and a miracle requires a great measure of faith in Posterity to believe it." Can anyone satisfactorily explain these remarkable words ?

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I have everywhere refrained from putting forward any airy conjectures, or roving guesses, but it is idle not to perceive that many strange and fretting concealments were being enacted at this period.

In the *Advancement of Learning* Bacon expresses his opinion that "writings should be such as should make men in love with the lessons and not with the teachers." He continues, "To speak the truth of myself, I have often wittingly and willingly neglected the glory of my own name, both in the works I now publish, and in those I contrive for hereafter, whilst I study to advance the good and profit of mankind." (VIII. I.). Again, we find him writing, "The state of the poor and oppressed have been precious in mine eyes. I have hated all cruelty and hardness of heart. I have *though in a despised weed* procured the good of all men."

Where, when, and how, did Bacon forego the glory of his own name? and by what 'despised weed' did he procure the good of all men? The expression "weed" cannot by any possibility be applied to his acknowledged Philosophical works. "*Mihi Silentio*" —of myself I am silent,— is one of his favourite expressions. Is it possible that modesty, and not arrogance, prompted the great Master Musician to be deaf to his own Symphony? I do not maintain that Bacon was the concealed author of all the plays from which I have quoted extracts; but for many of them he will I believe ultimately be found to have been responsible; and for others his disciples could probably have rendered some account. In Sculpture, Painting, and Literature, nothing is more perilous

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than to be dogmatic in differentiating between the authentic works of a Master, and the imitations of his own School.

A recent editor observes that, "in Bacon's day every important new idea was arrested in the name of Dogma; and as nearly strangled as was possible to those in authority."<sup>1</sup> It were a brave device if, as I suspect, Bacon systematically trickt up a company of taffeta fools, and under their feathers (dodging through the serried ranks of Authority) planted unsuspected, far forward into chaos the standard of the New Philosophy.

As if to prove the necessity for the ruse, the Dean of Ely in the Shakespeare Sermon of 1897 stated, "there were some things in Shakespeare that the author might have been burnt for had he been a theologian, just as certainly as there were things about politics, about civil liberty, which, had he been a politician or a statesman, would have brought him to the block."

Many ancient writers are recorded to have produced a fabulous number of books. Genius shows itself almost from the cradle. When Grotius "was but eight years old, *viz. anno* 1591, he did make verses *extempore* and disputed twice publicly in questions of Philosophy."<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Barrett Browning (another conspicuous prodigy) began writing at the callow age of eight; Pope lisped in numbers and the numbers came. But granting that Bacon, who, according to Pope, was "the greatest genius that England or perhaps any other country ever pro-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John M. Robertson.

<sup>1</sup> Intro: to *Works* of Grotius. London. 1655.

## CONCLUSION

duced," commenced production at an abnormally early age ; that he bestowed every moment of his leisure to writing ; that he composed during the night and dictated shorthand to his 'good pens' in the morning, it seems wholly beyond the reach of possibility that any one man could have achieved, alone or aided, the enormous total to which indications point. I am aware, that Rawley records the astonishing celerity of his master's writing ; that the whole of the *Apophthegms* were (it is said by Tenison) dictated from a sickbed in one day ; that Shakespeare wrote with that easiness that there was never a blot in his papers ; that Greene in a night and a day "would yark up a pamphlet as well as in seven years,"<sup>1</sup> and so forth. But admitting tireless speed and feverish energy, it seems impossible to contemplate some of the assertions of the *Manes* except as hyperbole.

Lope de Vega put down his output as 1500 plays, his early biographer talked of three or four hundred more ; 430 have actually come down to us. The stupendous and impossible output of the elder Dumas (1500 novels) is explained by a theory that he was surrounded by a group of young writers whose productions, modelled upon those of their Master, he touched up, edited and published. May not some similar explanation apply to the Elizabethan Drama ? A writer of one of the *Manes Verulamiani* was Thomas Randolph the author of *The Muses Looking Glass* which is undoubtedly a key to the whole Elizabethan Drama. This young man apostrophises Bacon as a second Apollo who routed the clouds,

<sup>1</sup> See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, article Nashe.

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a King among the Muses. He concludes his Elegy with the words "Yet after all, our Muse can bring thee no encomium ; thou thyself are Singer and singest, therefore thine own praise. Notwithstanding we will sing thy praise with whatsoever art we can : and if art fail this grief will be eulogy." Whether Bacon's entourage of scribes and shorthand writers were the "choir" who deplored their leader's fall ; whether they are to be identified with the English Areopagus of which Spenser and others were members, and whether the scrivenery at Twickenham, with its habitude of sending out manuscripts anonymously or under false names, was the nest whence the Elizabethan singing birds were trained to sing, are points which I do not discuss. The reader has the main evidence before him.

It may be objected that the coarseness and immodesty of the Elizabethan drama contradict any suggestion of moral import. Coarseness I concede ; immorality I fail to perceive. In an age when Popes threw dishes at their attendants' heads, and Bishops swore "choleric oaths" with " manifold rare upbraidings," little refinement could be expected from the unspiritual laity. "Coarse manners," says a modern writer, "were often the expression of coarser morals. Men of the purest and best intelligence shrank from no allusion, however gross, and felt no impulse to check their words in speech or writing." <sup>1</sup> There is nothing in the Elizabethan drama coarser than one or two of the jests included among Bacon's *Apophthegms*, yet the personality of Bacon was such that Osborn states

<sup>1</sup> *Social England*. Traill, vol. III, p. 525.

## CONCLUSION

it struck those with whom he came in contact "with an awful reverence."

What is but honest mirth in the eyes of one generation turns to unseemliness and ribaldry in the eyes of the next. "Serve God and act cleanly," says Nash, "a fit of mirth and an old song first if you will." <sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden, who considers the Elizabethan Drama to be for the most part devoid of conscious purpose, writes, "The chief playwright of the movement declared that the end of playing 'both at the first and now is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature.' A mirror has no tendency. The questions we ask about it are, Does this mirror reflect clearly and faithfully?" <sup>2</sup>

The Drama *per se* is sufficient evidence that the spacious times of great Elizabeth were mostly but feverous dog days. Poetry addressed to a class pleases so far as it depicts familiar incidents: with such appalling fidelity does the Drama portray the scenes and incidents of everyday existence that nowadays we in many instances shrink from the picture.

It was by bitter irony of circumstance that the sincere and highminded dramatists were forced to model their creations from the blood-smeared mud of men's everyday careers. "'Tis urged," says Massinger, "that we corrupt youth and traduce superiors," but, he asks,

When do we bring a vice upon the stage  
That goes off unpunished? Do we teach,  
By the success of wicked undertakings,

<sup>1</sup> *Summer's Last Will*, 1600.

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art*, p. 9.

## CONCLUSION

Others to tread in their forbidden steps ?  
We show no arts of Lydian panderism,  
Corinthian poisons, Persian flatteries,  
But mulcted so in the conclusion that  
Even those spectators that were so inclined,  
Go home changed men. <sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere 'the great and excellent Massinger'  
alludes to this same *raison d'être* of playing.

Nor can it appear  
Like an impossibility, but that  
Your father, looking on a covetous man  
Presented on the stage, as in a mirror,  
May see his own deformity, and loathe it. <sup>2</sup>

History, Politics, Literature, and all other departments of knowledge return the same answer, that the Elizabethan era was one of semi-barbarism. Civilisation as we understand it was unborn; Morality, even in a rudimentary form, seems hardly to have been awake. When Solon was asked whether he had given the best laws to the Athenians his answer was, 'The best they are capable of receiving.' Around the dramatists everything was low and coarse, yet of Shakespeare, as Emerson says, "What king has he not taught state? What maiden has not found him finer than her delicacy? What sage has he not outseen? What gentleman has he not instructed in the rudeness of his behaviour?"

Unless I misread Bacon, he was indifferent to the blame or censure of his own generation. "It is enough for me," he writes in *The Advancement of Learning*, "that I have sown unto Post-

<sup>1</sup> *The Roman Actor*, I. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *The Roman Auctor*, II. 1.



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erity and the Immortal God ;” and again in the *Novum Organum*, “ I bear myself soberly and profitably, sowing in the meantime for future ages the seeds of a purer truth.” He seems to have regarded himself as the great educator and emancipator of the human race ; as a Prometheus who brought down fire from Heaven. In the *Novum Organum* he draws to a close with the words, “ At length (like an honest and faithful guardian), I may hand over to men their fortunes now their understanding is emancipated and come as it were of age.” The harvest sown by our illustrious countryman has now been enjoyed by so many generations that we find it difficult to realise the bogs and marshlands of ignorance which existed all around him and by his labours have been redeemed to cultivation. It were well if we appreciated the literal accuracy of Ruskins assertion, “ It does not matter how little or how much any of us have read either of Homer or Shakespeare ; everything around us in substance or in thought, has been moulded by them. Of the scope of Shakespeare I will say only that the intellectual measure of every man since born, in the domains of creative thought, may be assigned to him according to the degree in which he has been taught by Shakespeare.”<sup>1</sup>

The facts which I have now presented are so extraordinary that, concerning as they do, the childhood of modern civilisation, they must sooner or later challenge the closest attention.

As Ben Jonson says in his *Discoveries*, “ By discrediting falsehood, truth grows in request.

<sup>1</sup> (*The Mystery of Life* 1869, p. 109).

## CONCLUSION

We must not go about like men anguished and perplexed for vicious affectation of praise, but calmly study the separation of opinions, find the errors that have intervened, awake Antiquity, call former times into question,.... mingle no matter of doubtful credit with the simplicity of truth, but gently stir the mould about the root of the question."

Carlyle, after prophesying the expansion of the Anglo-Saxon race, said that the greatest practical problem was, how it was to be held together, what bond would be strong enough? "England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English: in America, in New Holland, East and West to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one nation, so that they will not fall out and fight, but live at peace in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another?" He then says, "This is justly regarded as the greatest practical problem, the thing all manner of sovereignties and governments are here to accomplish." What then is it that will accomplish this? If anything is capable it is the Genius of Shakespeare. "Call it not fantastic," he says, "for there is much reality in it. Here, I say, is an English King, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments, can dethrone! This King Shakespeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty over us all as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying signs; indestructible; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We

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can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the nations of Englishmen a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever English men and women are, they will say to one another : ‘ Yes, this Shakespeare is ours ; we produced him ; we are of one blood and kin with him ! ’ ”

A vaster or benigner spirit ne’er steered Humanity, yet, as Emerson observes, “ There is somewhat touching in the madness with which the passing age mischooses the object on which all candles shine and all eyes are turned ; the care with which it registers every trifle touching Queen Elizabeth and King James and the Essexes, Leicesters, Burleighs and Buckingham, and lets pass without a single valuable note the founder of another dynasty, which alone will cause the Tudor dynasty to be remembered,—the man who carries the Anglo-Saxon race in him by the inspiration which feeds him, and on whose thoughts the foremost people of the world are now for some ages to be nourished. ”

THE END

*L'ENVOI*

Let meaner spirits stoop to low precarious fame,  
Content on gross and coarse applause to live,  
And what the dull and senseless rabble give,  
Thou didst it still with noble scorn contemn ;  
Nor wouldst that wretched alms receive,  
The poor subsistence of some bankrupt, sordid name.  
Thine was no empty vapour, raised beneath,  
And formed of common breath,  
The false and foolish fire that whisked about  
By popular air, and glares awhile, and then goes out ;  
But 'twas a solid, whole, and perfect globe of light,  
That shone all over, was all over bright,  
And dared all sullyng clouds, and feared no  
[dark'ning night.

Like the gay monarch of the stars and sky,  
Who wheresoe'er he does display  
His sovereign lustre, his majestic ray,  
Straight all the less, and petty glories nigh  
Vanish, and shrink away,  
O'erwhelmed, and swallowed by the greater blaze  
[of day ;  
With such a strong, an awful and victorious beam  
Appeared, and ever shall appear, thy fame,  
Viewed and adored by all the undoubted race of wit,  
Who only can endure to look on it.  
The rest o'ercome with too much light,  
With too much brightness dazzled, or extinguished  
[quite :

## L'ENVOI

Restless and uncontrolled it now shall pass  
As wide a course about the world as he,  
And when his long repeated travels cease  
Begin a new and vaster race,  
And still tread round the endless circle of eternity.”  
(1616)

*A bon entendeur, salut !*

## APPENDIX A

### “AN IMPARTIAL STUDY OF THE SHAKESPEARE TITLE”

This able work has been published since the foregoing pages were written. Its author, Judge Stotsenburg, has collected a large number of parallel passages from the writers I have dealt with; but, curiously enough, he notes none of those which happen to have struck me.

His deductions from the facts are that the Shakespeare Plays are not the work of one single author, but of a poetic syndicate including among others, Drayton, Dekker, Heywood, Webster, Middleton, and Porter. To this group Bacon was merely a polisher and reconstructor; “a conclusion that forces itself upon my mind because first I believe that Bacon if he originated the plays would have observed the unities, and secondly because his philosophical views and his peculiarities are interwoven in some of them.”

In point of fact Judge Stotsenburg tears the personality of “Shakespeare” into tatters, and allots the fragments to comparatively unheard-of men.

The flaw in this reasoning seems to me to be the supposition that any Poet could be so unsmutted with human weaknesses, as to publish his *inferior* work under his *own* name and “the immediate jewels of his soul” under that of some one else.

## APPENDIX B.

### A LARGER ISSUE

On December 9th 1905 there appeared in the *Athenæum* a letter from Mr Sidney Lee wherein he states

“I am chiefly impressed by the proofs I am accumulating of the closeness of the relations between Elizabethan literary effort and that of contemporary France and Italy; and of the community of literary taste and feeling, which almost rendered literary Europe at the end of the sixteenth century a single Commonwealth of letters.”

This raises an interrogation whether the English *Litterati* with Bacon at their head were not associated with that great Pythagorean movement of which Gabriele Rossetti wrote as follows.

“The greatest number of those literary productions which we have hitherto been in the habit of considering in the light of amusing trifles, or amatory rhymes, or as wild visions of the romantic, or heavy treatises by the dull scholar; are in reality works which enclose recondite doctrines and secret rites; an inheritance bequeathed by remote ages, and what may to many appear mere fantastic fables are a series of historical facts expressed in ciphers which preserve the



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remembrance of secret actions of our fathers. The obscurity which not infrequently involves these works was studiously and purposely contrived and if it have never yet been cleared away, no blame should be attributed to those who might have dispersed it; the difficulties of the time, and the dangers which encompassed them were sufficient to deter them from so doing. The most learned men and authors of various ages and countries were pupils of this mysterious school, and never losing sight of their one grand object they were constantly on the alert to bring persons of talent and genius to their way of thinking, and to render them cooperators in their bold projects. There can be no doubt that the present state of civilisation in Europe is in a great measure an effect of this school.... which worked to free mankind from the tyranny of priesthood as well as from monarchical despotism.... The opinions I have advanced though at first sight they may appear the dreams of a diseased mind, are in reality true and unquestionable.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Disquisition on the anti Papal spirit that produced the Reformation: its secret influence on the Literature of Europe in general and of Italy in particular.* Preface and pp. 195-197, vol II. London 1834.

## APPENDIX C

### A CASTLE IN SPAIN

Writing on the subject of the Shakespeare Memorial in the November (1905) number of *Broad Views* Mrs. Helen Hinton Stewart observes :

“That the Dramas are pre-eminently educational must be admitted by all. The Histories are themselves a magnificent series of object lessons. The Tragedies show us the ravages of sin ; the Comedies are delicate lessons in refinement, and kindness, and large hearted tolerance..... It certainly would seem that a Memorial Theatre would be the most suitable Commemoration for the poet whose large vision saw the world as a stage, and who, through the stage, sought to teach men so to live that the celestial ‘lookers on’ need not weep over their errors and ‘fantastic tricks’.....

In a Theatre built at the public expense and with a substantial fund to fall back on, the great work of instruction might be carried on. Many of the finest of the plays, at present unknown to theatre goers because not calculated to draw large audiences, could be acted without fear of loss. Other classic dramas, English or foreign, could be introduced. New plays could be encouraged whose aim was not merely to attract but to

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teach and elevate. The resources of modern History have surely not yet been exhausted. The immortal series might be continued through the Stewart and Hanoverian lines, not perhaps on the same plane of genius but with an equally earnest desire to make the great actions of our ancestors an encouragement or a warning to their posterity.

A Commemoration Scheme which took the form of a Shakespeare Memorial Theatre built and upheld by public subscription, primarily for the production of the Shakespeare Dramas, and secondarily for the production and encouragement of all plays having an educational and elevating tendency, if of sufficient literary merit, leaving the title of "Shakespeare" to be interpreted according to the faith of each subscriber, such a scheme would in all probability, meet with universal and enthusiastic support."

On reading this I fell into a muse, and among other things I dreamed that the unsightly group of mean streets to the immediate west of Charing Cross had been swept away, as unworthy of their situation in the heart of London; and that in their place, free on all sides, there had arisen the stateliest theatre in Europe.

It faced the Thames Embankment, and was carried through to the Strand, and I perceived that it covered the site of old York House, the birthplace and residence of Francis Bacon. To travellers arriving from the Continent it was the most conspicuous Building that greeted them to London, serving as a memento of the World's kinship. From across the intervening streets the

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Mother of Parliaments at Westminster saluted the Mother of the Stage at Charing Cross, and the Thames linked them to each other and to the Sea. I saw on entering that a statue of Orpheus stood within the Entrance Hall, and that around its pedestal were inscribed the words of Shakespeare's "Orpheus and his Lute", below which was engraved the music of Mr. Edward German's setting. I noticed further that everywhere the ornaments and decoration of the Building were emblematic; the floors and pathways, for example, being covered with the figures of fantastic reptiles. This particular design I was informed was emblematic of the animal passions which Shakespeare taught must be trampled under foot.

In the centre was a Theatre and Concert Hall to which the cost of admission was but small the aim being to reach and give pleasure to the poorer classes of London. I heard that it was customary for Royal guests and illustrious personages to be entertained at this National Playhouse in lieu of at Covent Garden; and that the at-one-time conventional gala performance of operatic snippets had been superseded.

Moreover I dreamed that Sir Edward Elgar had composed a Symphony for the opening of this Imperial Memorial. In the form of three movements this Symphony depicted HISTORY, COMEDY, and TRAGEDY. There was also a Prelude which suggested the sweetening and melting away of Mediaevalism under the influence of Orpheus' harp. The harsh and abrupt conclusion with which this Prelude came to an end denoted, I think, the temporary failure and destruction of the Poet by the forces of pedantry and ignorance.

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The Symphony proper opened with what I may designate "the Bacchides theme," a motif which grew feebler and more faint until, under the influence of a stately and most scholarly contrapuntal movement, the dissonances gave way before a *tout ensemble* denoting HISTORY and EDUCATION.

In the middle movement (depicting high and excellent TRAGEDY) I seemed as it were to hear the hammering of malignant chance, and the overthrow of passion and endeavour to the remorseless thudding of Fate's drums.

Into the *Finale* the composer had shot the warp and woof of happiness and gaiety, entangling the very Spirits of Comedy, and light-winged Mirth.

In the uprush of this climax I awoke.



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